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NEW THOUGHT CHRISTIANIZED

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OLD ALONG WITH ME," ETC.



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“Every scribe who hath been made a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, who bringeth out of his treasure things new and old.”—MATT. 13:52.

“Old things need not be therefore true,
O brother man, nor yet the new;
Ah, still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again.”

—ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH.

CHAPTER I

AFFIRMATION

Affirmation is "the final dictate of reason"; the fiat of the will; the *yea* of the soul. The overt act of affirmation brings latent faith to the birth, and strengthens it where it already exists. When a thing is *affirmed*, faith in it is *confirmed*. So great is the power of affirmation that a man may keep on affirming a thing that is not true until he comes to believe it. Beginning by deceiving others, he ends in deceiving himself, coming into that condition described by Paul as "believing a lie"; hoodwinking his own soul, and saying unto darkness, "Be thou my light."

In the teaching of Jesus, affirmation played an important part. He seldom reasoned; he affirmed; he declared. His seven "I am's," in which he discloses his real selfhood, are seven personal affirmations. He himself was God's great affirmation. "In him was *yea*"—the full and final affirmation of God touching things spiritual and eternal.

Throughout the Christian centuries the

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Church has taught by affirmation. The Apostles' Creed—the earliest formulation of Christian doctrine—and all subsequent creeds, are simply a series of affirmations. To her great loss she has followed this method too sparingly. The modern cults make more of it. They follow Emerson's advice, "Nerve yourself with incessant affirmatives," and drive the truth home by constant repetition. And what is still more important, they dwell upon the positive rather than upon the negative side of things. In this they are wise; for there is no power in negations. Mephistopheles is represented in *Faust* as saying, "The spirit I, which evermore denies"; and by denial he fain would reduce all things to nothingness.

It is the affirmation which follows denial that gives to it its value; just as it is the numeral that gives value to a string of ciphers. It is not denial that gives to Christian Science its power, but affirmation—not the denial of sickness, but the affirmation of health; not the denial of sin, but the affirmation of goodness; not the denial of death, but the affirmation of life. In the degree in which it becomes negative, Christian teaching becomes powerless. It needs positive conviction, expressed in positive affirmation to give it propagating power.

Hence it is that the dogmatic denominations make converts, while the undogmatic denominations suffer decline. Conviction produces conviction. The gospel runs its conquering course "from faith to faith," that is, from the faith of one convinced soul to the faith of another convinced soul. If the Christianity of to-day would maintain its power, producing conviction in others, it must then, first of all, possess the positive note of "creative assertion." It must "doubt its doubts, and believe its beliefs," affirming with a new emphasis, born of a new experience, the things which it has formally professed to believe; saying to the world, "that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

In making affirmations the important thing to begin with is to see that they are true; for in the long run anything built upon falsehood is like a house built on the sand—it is sure to come to ruin. That only can endure which is founded upon the rock of eternal truth.

Now, the significant thing about the affirmation made within the circle of the modern cults is that they are almost exclusively *self*-affirmations. They consist of assertions of self-sufficiency and goodness, and present a new form of self-righteousness, masquerad-

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ing under the guise of a true, but wrongly directed philosophy. Here are some of them taken at random from a recent representative work: "I am wise;" "I am strong;" "I am free;" "I am pure;" "I have all growth, energy, and power;" "I have overcome the world, the flesh and evil." In these affirmations there is not a word of truth. If those who make them saw themselves as God sees them, all such self-complacent utterances would freeze upon their lips. What ought to be affirmed is not, "I am wise," but, I am seeking after wisdom; not "I am strong," but, I am seeking to acquire strength; not "I am pure," but, I am striving after purity; not "I am free," but, I am struggling after freedom; not "I have all power," but, I am keeping my soul open to the fountain of power. A fatal arrest is put upon all progress when the profession of attainment is put in the place of the avowal of a purpose to push on.

We follow a flying goal; we strive after an enlarging ideal; we climb mountain steeps that rise higher and higher unto the eternal blue. Our only safe motto is that contained in the words, "not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect, but I press on" (Phil. 3:12).

In striking contrast with the attitude of vain self-confidence assumed by many within the modern cults, is that of the humble Christian, who instead of boasting of attainment, bewails his shortcomings; instead of professing goodness, confesses sin; instead of standing on a pedestal, lies low in the dust; instead of taking his place by the side of the self-applauding Pharisee, takes it by the side of the penitent publican; being still old-fashioned enough to believe in humility as in itself a virtue, and as that

“low sweet root
From which all heavenly virtues shoot.”

One thing, however, for which we are indebted to the modern school of thought which we are considering, is that it has restored to us the lost sense of the dignity and worth of human nature. It has displaced the extravagant self-depreciation which could lead anyone to say, “I am a worm, and no man” (Psa. 22:6), with the saner view which leads us proudly to say, I am a man and no worm. But in the reaction from this morbid view of human nature, which prevailed until recently, and which led our worthy sires to speak of themselves as “worms of the dust,” the pen-

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dulum has swung in the opposite direction; and from thinking of himself *less* highly than he ought to think, man has come to think of himself *more* highly than he ought to think. He has even come to think that there is nothing in all the universe more worthy of worship than himself; and to adopt for his new *Gloria in Excelsis*,

"Glory to man in the highest,
For man is the Master of things."

More seemly would it be if he gave the place of supremacy to the Supreme, and took up the refrain:

"Glory to God in the highest,
For God is the Master of men."

When the balance has been struck between undue self-depreciation and undue self-appreciation, and a just appraisal of conduct has been made, a normal man will find many things regarding which he has no need to be ashamed, and others regarding which, if he is wise, he will say as little as possible, and be glad when the hand of friendship throws over them the mantle of charity.

A noteworthy example of Christian affirmation is furnished by the declaration of

Paul, "I can do all things" (Phil. 4:13). These words have a modern sound. Suppose we stop him and ask: "Paul, can you do all things absolutely?" "No, not all things absolutely, but all things within the sphere of moral obligation." "How can you do them?" "Through Christ, who strengtheneth me." "Ah, that makes all the difference. Anyone could do the things he is commended to do with such help as that, and no one can do them without it." "Our sufficiency is of God." The need of his help we can never outgrow. In him we are to trust; in him we are to hope; concerning him we are to make our supreme affirmation. Guided by the light of Christ's teaching; girded by his unfailing power, enveloped by his everlasting love, we are to acknowledge to the world our measureless indebtedness to him; and when life's short course is run, and we come to stand before him, we are to cast our crowns at his feet, exclaiming, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto *thy great* name be all the glory."

There are affirmations which every Christian is warranted to make, and which he cannot make too frequently, too confidently, or too emphatically. Some of them we shall endeavor to indicate.

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AFFIRMATIONS.

By the grace of God I am what I am.

Christ is made unto me wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

I have in Christ all sufficiency in all things, that I may abound unto every good work.

Christ is in me the hope of glory, and the beginning of it.

CHAPTER II

THE LAW OF SUGGESTION

Christian Science refuses to acknowledge its dependence upon, or its indebtedness to, the working of the law of suggestion; New Thought frankly recognizes its far-reaching power, and works in harmony with it; Psychotherapy, appreciating its therapeutic value, reduces it to a science. That suggestion plays an important part in the action of mind upon mind does not admit of any question whatever. By it, more than by anything else, influence is exerted by one personality upon another. Suggestion is of three kinds:

1. *Auto-suggestion.* That is, suggestion which the conscious mind picks up, entertains, makes its own, and applies. Into the thought-reservoir of the subjective mind there flows a constant stream of suggestions which are stored up for future use. Out of these accumulations are "the issues of life;" and no one can tell at what unexpected times any one of them may be acted upon. Although long

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forgotten they may at any time sprout up like buried seeds, and come to swift fruition.

It goes without the saying that careful attention ought to be given to the filling of the mind with good suggestions. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Phil. 4:8). Lofty ideals are to be cherished; the companionship of noble thoughts is to be cultivated; the imagination in its flights is to be allowed to alight and rest only on the bright and inspiring side of things; warders are to be set before eye-gate and ear-gate, and every unworthy suggestion that asks for admission turned back, and welcome given only to the good. The guests received will determine the nature of the thought-life, and upon the thought-life more than anything else human well-being depends. The state of a man's soul has more to do with his highest welfare than the state of his surroundings.

To man has been given the power of controlling his thoughts. The will is the rudder of the mind, and can steer its thoughts in any

direction the captain may choose, and keep them from being deflected from their proper course by any cross current of suggestion. It can even reverse them, and turn them in an entirely new direction. This is the significance of the act of repentance. Primarily it is a change of thought, and after that a change of feeling and of action.

Suggestion is something that may or may not be acted upon. There is nothing compulsory about it. Evil suggestions are to be resisted, good suggestions are to be accepted. It was a wise remark of an old monk that we cannot hinder a bird from alighting upon our head, but we can hinder it from building its nest in our hair. We can refuse to read an unclean book, or look upon an unclean picture, lest their impure suggestions kindle the fires of passion. On the other hand, we can peruse the loftiest literature, and lay open our minds to the refining influence of the noblest works of art. By the thoughts we harbor we can convert our hearts into a sty or into a temple. Although we may not be responsible for the suggestions that come to us, we are responsible for the manner in which we deal with them, and for the influence which we allow them to have upon us. Once given

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heart-room they control us, for "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he"; that is to say, as a man habitually thinks, so will his life be shaped. Vagrant, passing thoughts have a passing influence, but the general trend of thought makes a permanent impression. The procession of thoughts that march through the mind cut deep tracks in the gray matter of the brain, and tracks no less deep in the soul, and in the character.

It is said that a man is known by the company he keeps; and this is especially true regarding the company he entertains within the secret chambers of his soul. But who knows what is going on within any man's breast, save God, and the man himself? And yet it is in this inner place that a man's true life is lived; and the man that God knows him to be may be very different from the man that his closest friends imagine him to be. A man's dreams form an important part of his real life, and these are complexioned by his thoughts. What a man thinks in his waking hours he dreams in his sleeping hours, when the mixed contents of his subconscious mind rise to the surface. It is this reflection that has led some one to say that "a man is no better than what he is when in the dark."

Then he is off guard and lets himself down, giving the reins to his thoughts, and allowing them to wander at their own sweet will. To curb them, and set them in order, demands strenuous effort. As it is always easier to creep than to walk, to float than to swim, it needs the constant up-pushing power of a trained and vigorous will to keep the soul moving toward the higher altitudes of the spiritual realm, where the good angels of pure thoughts continually dwell.

2. *Suggestion by others*, or suggestion from without. Every man is acted upon by outside influences—both good and bad. Seeds of suggestion of all kinds are being constantly dropped into his soul, many of them to lie dormant for a time, but ultimately to germinate, and bring forth fruit. It is chiefly through suggestion that men influence one another. The modern art of advertising is founded upon the operation of this law—its skillfully devised suggestions being the stimuli to which we respond. Venders of patent medicines count upon it for results. Physicians are beginning to appreciate its practical importance. They know the value of a change of suggestion in producing mental reactions, and they know what wonders can be wrought by

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a change of place and associations. They are discovering that the way to get people well, and keep them well, is to suggest health. A person may be fascinated with the idea of sickness until it becomes fixed in his mind and turns auto-suggestion into a disease-breeding influence. In such a case the only remedy is the displacement of the mischief-making thought with something better. Upon this principle the mother acts when she kisses the hurt finger of her child to make it well. She drives out the feeling of pain by the expulsive power of a new suggestion.

Sometimes suggestion comes through our social sympathies, as in the contagious influence of a crowd, when the individual is swept along upon the tide of a popular sentiment. This explains panics; it also explains religious revivals. An amusing illustration of the same law of social influence is seen when, in a public assembly, yawning and coughing are produced by suggestion.

Suggestions come also out of the unseen, from agencies which we cannot trace. Many of them proceed from malign powers. All we can say of them is what the Master said of the tares with which a farmer's field was sown: "An enemy hath done this." Evil suggestions

are the main source of temptation. They fall upon the soul like sparks upon a gunpowder mine. Jesus could say, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me"—that is, nothing upon which he can work. In most of us he finds abundance of combustible material. "Every man is tempted," says James, "when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed." In this case he becomes a devil to himself. In other instances temptation is from without. Against it the whole soul may revolt, hurling it back into the darkness from whence it came. When thus repudiated it involves no responsibility whatsoever. Only when accepted and obeyed does it become one's own.

Not only do we receive suggestions, we give them—not by speech alone, but by the direct projection of our thoughts into other minds. Whether as telepathy, thought-transference, absent treatment, or prayer, or under any other mode, there is a subtle, mysterious power which cannot be explained upon any other ground than the inflowing of personality into personality; and of all forms of social influence this undoubtedly constitutes the crown.

3. *Divine suggestion.* This is the most

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powerful of all; and it is one which is frequently overlooked. God seeks to keep himself in unbroken connection with man. He has given to them his word, which is a book of suggestions. In it are expressed the wonderful thoughts by which he seeks to influence their hearts and lives. These thoughts are given in hints, and partial revealings, "here a little, and there much." But he has other ways of reaching them than through the word. Conscience is his voice within the soul—the mouth of the moral nature through which he speaks. The Holy Spirit is his "inner voice," whose whisperings are directed with a personal intent to all. In these three separate ways God is suggesting his thoughts to us that he may influence us for good. When he "healeth the broken in heart" it is by suggesting to them comforting thoughts; when he answers prayer for guidance, it is by giving suggestions of what we ought to do; when he redeems a soul, it is through the power of some new revelation. Through truth he leads to life. How important, then, is it to keep the mind open to his suggestions, ever bending an attentive ear, and saying, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." "To-day, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart."

THE LAW OF SUGGESTION 19

Within the world at large the same law rules. Before its life can be changed its thought must be changed. Very little is ever settled by the battle of arms, more is settled afterward by the battle of ideas. Ideas rule the world. To get the world to change its mind, to get it to see things as He sees them, is the end of all God's effort. For not until the world accepts his suggestions about things and thinks his thoughts after him, will all be right with it. His thoughts accepted will make Godlike men, and Godlike men will make a Godlike world.

AFFIRMATIONS.

I will turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity.

I will welcome within the home of my heart only thoughts that are good.

I will be guided and governed by what God suggests more than by what man suggests.

I will open my heart to God as the earth opens her bosom to the sun.

CHAPTER III

SALVATION BY DISPLACEMENT

It is a principle in physics that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. The one will displace the other. A ship floating in still seas will displace a volume of water exactly equal to its own weight. The same principle holds good in the spiritual world. No one can follow, at the same time, two opposing forces; the one will crowd the other out. The way to overcome the evil tendencies of our nature is by following the injunction, "Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16). Those who "walk by the Spirit," being led by his promptings, supported by his power, governed by his will, have no relish for the things of the fleshly life. They live in a high region where the clamorous demands of the lower nature if heard are unheeded. There are better things to claim their attention; there are more satisfactory things to strive after. Possession of the higher leaves no room for

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the lower; desire for the higher quenches desire for the lower.

At this point New Thought has rendered valuable service by showing that every evil, physical and spiritual, is to be overcome, not so much by direct resistance as by offering other considerations to it; and that every evil has its remedy, just as every poison has its antidote. It has taught the expulsive power of a new idea, and has kept reiterating—Think good thoughts and there will be no room in the heart for bad ones; let in the light, and the light will expel the darkness. Or, as John Newton put it long ago, "Fill the bushel with wheat, and you may defy the devil to fill it with tares."

The evangelist Moody, in his practical way, was accustomed to illustrate this truth by lifting a glass from the table and saying, "This glass is full of air, which I cannot clutch and draw out." Then taking a pitcher of water and filling the glass he would say, "Now it is all out, for something else is in its place."

A classical illustration of this truth is found in the story taken from Greek mythology which tells of the very different ways in which two sets of voyagers sought to over-

come the seductive charms of the Sirens. When Odysseus, on his return from Troy, passed the island of these treacherous nymphs, knowing that all who stopped to listen to their enchanting strains would be seized with an unconquerable desire to leap overboard and join them, he filled the ears of all on board with wax. But when the Argonauts sailed near the abode of the Sirens, and were being powerfully affected by their enchanting strains, Orpheus, perceiving their danger, took up his magic lyre and so completely absorbed their attention that they passed the island in safety. This latter way is the more effective in breaking the spell of the tempter. It makes one as imperious to evil influence as the ancient saint of whom it was said that the fires of hell could not burn him, because his soul was full of heaven.

When, however, we come to the development of this idea of salvation by displacement, there is often in New Thought literature much haziness and confusion of thought touching the nature of this displacement and the way in which it takes place. Man is represented as having a divided self; or, rather, two separate selves—one the ordinary,

limited self with which he has to live from day to day, the other a shadowy subliminal self, described as "the Spiritual Self, which is one with God." For this splitting of self, psychology gives no warrant whatsoever. Man is one; albeit, his nature has two sides, an upper and under, and between them there is constant conflict. The duality of which he is conscious when he speaks of his worse and better self is moral, not metaphysical, and is simply an expression of the difference between the actual and the ideal self; the self he is, and the self he ought to be.

At many points New Thought and Christian thought meet; here they show the widest line of cleavage. The "Higher Self" which New Thought would substitute for the lower one is not a higher *moral* self, but a self possessing a higher grade of power. Besides, it is already in possession; and any failure on the part of anyone to acquire for himself the desirable things of life is attributed to the fact that he has not used it. To the man worsted in life's fight it comes saying, You have resident within you all the forces that you need for victory. Your diviner self which is without weakness or limitation waits for recognition, and if you are only true to

it, and live it out, you will express in yourself the divine perfections. And so the affirmation is actually made, "I am an expression of the Divine Life," while the puny, imperfect mortal who makes it knows full well that he is often the expression of something very different. As against this doctrine of egotheism Christianity says, The power you need is within your reach, and all you have to do is to open your hearts and it will flow in. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." First receive the divine life, then express it; first become partakers of the divine moral nature, and then manifest the divine moral character; first put off the old man, and then put on the new; first get a better self, and then be true to it; first get a new heart, and then will come the new life; first make the tree good, and the fruit will be good. From the need of regeneration Christianity leaves no way of escape.

In the Christian scheme of things the substitution of Christ for self is the great displacement, which forms the central thing in Christian experience. Of this Paul speaks in the mystical words: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live,

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but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20.) Christ becomes to the Christian a new life-center; the old self life which is crucified with him unto death dies, and is buried in his grave, and in its place there is a new center of selfhood. Christ lives within, the animating principle of all the life's activities. By the reinforcement of his presence he enables a man to live above himself, and to attain a higher, larger, richer life than could have been possible had he not taken possession of him. Into his soul comes fulness of power, which works out in every direction; affecting everything within the circle of human interests; making the whole life an incarnation of Christ's spirit, a repetition of his ministry to men; thus bringing it into harmonious union with the Infinite in the realization of those high ends which it was predestined to serve.

AFFIRMATIONS.

The bad I replace with the good.

Divine will I substitute for self-will.

Not by self-emptying, but by divine infilling do I attain the perfect life.

Christ in me the soul of my soul is the end of weakness and strife, the beginning of strength and peace.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT IS MAN?

The time was when religious interest centered in the study of God, today it centers in the study of man. In due time the pendulum will swing back again. Meanwhile it is wise to follow the trend of the times, and while not ignoring the first question of religion, "What is God?" give due consideration to the second—"What is man?"

It is with the second question of religion that New Thought is mainly concerned. It is strong on anthropology, and weak on theology; and hence has more to say about man than about God. In turning the thought of man to himself it has given an impetus to the study of psychology—the science of the soul. It believes in the right of the soul to be heard; and in the validity of its testimony. In the contents of consciousness it finds the basis of all knowledge; and rightly so. It has evolved an anthropology of its own, of which

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the following are some of the leading characteristics:

1. It has given emphasis to the idea that *man is a spirit*; that he *has* a body, but that his body is not *him*, and *his*. In this dual nature the spirit has the body for a habitation, and organ of expression; the body has the spirit for its animating principle. Man is thus compounded of clay and fire. He has his feet on the earth, and his head among the stars. His physical body connects him with the cosmic order, his spiritual nature connects him with the universal kingdom of the spirit.

2. *That man is a person—not a thing*; that what we call the awakening of consciousness is the awakening to the fact of personality. When man comes to himself he sees himself to be a separate entity, a separate being. Nor does this consciousness of personal existence ever leave him. It is the one permanent thing in the midst of the fluctuating experience of thought and feeling. Through all the changes that may come, the conviction abides that "I am I." A man can no more get away from himself than he can jump over his own shadow.

Any scheme of thought dealing with the

relation of the human to the divine which allows the sense of personality to be obscured, by representing the finite as melting into the infinite, practically parts company with Christianity, which always represents the union of man and God as the union of two distinct and mutually related personalities; and makes personality finite and infinite, the rock upon which the temple of truth is built.

3. *That man has locked up within him undreamed of powers which he can tap, and call into exercise.* This fact has come to many with all the freshness and force of a new discovery, and has given them the vision of new possibilities in their lives. In this aspect of it the New Thought movement is a wholesome reaction from the old-time Calvinism, which left man bound hand and foot by a divine decree, or reduced him to a mere puppet which moved only if an Almighty hand pulled the strings.

It is now coming to be generally accepted that man is not helpless in the sense that he can do nothing for himself. He can do more than the wildest flight of fancy ever imagined. But he cannot do everything. He is finite and limited. His life is rooted in a sense of dependence upon a higher power. His union

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with that power, and his coöperation with it, are his own voluntary acts, and by them his true life on earth is realized.

4. *That eternal progress is the law of life;* that to man belongs the glory of going on; not merely in the sense of continuing to exist, but also in the sense of continuing to make progress. He can now and here enter upon a course of everlasting life, which will continue in unknown worlds, and through ages yet to come. Upon his progress no limit can be placed.

The same is true of the race. "Through the ages an increasing purpose runs." Men do not die like flies in summer, but are linked one to another in an endless chain. One generation takes up its march where another stops; so that despite its ebbing tides, and its fearful collapses, the general movement of civilization is forever onward.

5. *That man is the child of God.* And so in a true sense he is. But there is a scale of sonship. Natural sonship comes first, in harmony with the law expressed in the words, "that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual." (I Cor. 15:46.) Man is God's child by nature. He possesses his inbreathed life; he has been

made in his image. To his high lineage he has not been true; he has belied his divine sonship, living as a prodigal, and often becoming an out and out child of the devil; but his real, original relationship is with God; and nothing can ever sever the vital bond which unites him with the Father. When he returns from his wanderings he comes back to the condition of true sonship, from which he himself voluntarily departed. But he has to come by the lowly way of penitence and forgiveness before there is killed for him the fatted calf, and all the rights and privileges of the father's house are restored to him.

Natural sonship belongs to every man without his seeking, spiritual sonship is voluntarily chosen; natural sonship belongs to the once-born, spiritual sonship to the twice-born; natural sonship is implied in the birth after the flesh, spiritual sonship in the birth after the spirit. Nothing can ever alter the fact that every man is God's offspring; and nothing can ever alter the fact that before he can become God's child, in the New Testament acceptance of the term, he must pass from natural to spiritual sonship, and live in filial relation to God. Upon this high plane the

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Apostle John puts the experience of divine sonship, when he says, "As many as received him"—that is, as many as received Christ into their hearts and lives—"to them gave he the right to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name; who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God." (John 1:12, 13.)

Failing to see this distinction between natural and spiritual sonship, New Thought makes over to all men the heritage which belongs to God's spiritual children, promising freely, without regard to moral meetness, the blessings which are for the regenerated alone. And rushing in where angels would fear to tread it does not even hesitate to apply to all men such terms as "I in Thee, and Thou in me," which are used exclusively to express the union of Christ with the Father, and of the believer with Christ. Against God's natural children doors are barred which are open to his spiritual children. The key to the possession of power and privilege is a new heart. For as the Master has said, "Except ye be born anew ye cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3.)

AFFIRMATIONS.

I am a spirit, clothed for a season in mortal flesh.

I am heir of all the ages past, and of all the ages yet to come.

I am living under the law of eternal progress, and have all eternity in which to grow.

I am a child of God, made in his image and destined to dwell with him in everlasting felicity.

CHAPTER V

INTROSPECTION

The majority of people give too much thought to themselves. They are too introspective, too self-conscious. They brood over their little aches and ailments; they diagnose their mental and physical symptoms; they watch their changing moods; and keep a close inspection generally over the operations of their souls. To the accentuation of this tendency the New Thought movement, among others, contributes.

A man may be too much with himself. He may live too much *within* himself. From that mental attitude it is but a short step to his living too much *to* himself. The highest life is self-forgetting. Perfect health is unconscious of itself. When undue attention is given to the working of any particular organ of the body the disease that is dreaded is often produced. To enjoy the fulness of life, and the zest of living, one must give himself with abandon to some noble task, or to some great human interest; forgetting himself in his work, or in his thought for others, and

fighting his battle with such heat of blood as to become oblivious to any minor wound he may receive. The less he thinks of himself, and considers his own feelings, the more apt is he to succeed.

There is, however, a wise as well as an unwise introspection. Every man ought to examine himself, that he may know himself. Of all objects in the universe, there is none of deeper interest to a man than himself; and of all the things that are happening in his life, those that are going on beneath the surface are the most momentous. What he thinks, and feels, and wills, are the things of paramount importance. But just as a virtue if pushed too far may become a fault, introspection unduly indulged in may become a weakness. There is a morbid psychology, and much of the nervous depression and physical disturbance of today are caused by turning the mind too much upon itself, and making its operations the subject of too minute and prolonged investigation.

From the spiritual point of view the inward look is disconcerting. What a man finds when he looks within his own heart is fitted to strip from him every shred of self-complacency. In himself he can find no satisfac-

tion. As well may he think of looking into a coal pit to see the sun as of looking into his heart to find that which will bring brightness and comfort. Gloss it over as we may, the ugly fact which confronts a man as he looks his soul squarely and honestly in the face is his own sinfulness. In the holiest hearts the sense of sin is often most keenly felt, and the best of men are often the readiest to say with Henry Ware:—

“It is not what my hands have done
That weighs my spirit down,
And casts a shadow o’er the sun
And over earth a frown.
It is not any heinous guilt,
Or vice by man abhorred;
For fair the fame that I have built,
A fair life’s just reward—
And men would wonder if they knew
How sad I feel, with sins so few.

Alas, they only see in part,
When thus they judge the whole;
They cannot look upon the heart;
They cannot read the soul.
But I survey myself within,
And mournfully I feel
How deep the principle of sin
Its roots may there conceal
And spread its poison through the frame
Without a deed that man can blame.”

When the hour of self-revelation comes to a soul, and he begins to see himself as God sees him, and as he really is, in the light of the Infinite Purity, he veils his face, exclaiming, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?"

It is a striking fact that Christian teaching does not encourage the habit of introvision, which has prevailed so extensively among the religions of the East. The rather has it sought to lead men to turn with averted face from the distressing vision of their inner mortal selves, and hail the mighty deliverer who has come to their relief. Its motto is, "Looking unto Jesus" (Heb. 12:2); that is, looking off from everything else, and fixing the gaze of the soul upon Him alone. The Old Testament exhortation, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth" (Isa. 25:42), has for its New Testament equivalent, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). To him we are to look with eager interest and undivided attention until the vision splendid fills the whole horizon of the soul.

In his deepest need man is forced to look without. He cannot "plunge into himself and rise redeemed." He cannot heal his wounds

by looking at them; he cannot better himself by brooding over his sins. As the serpent-bitten Hebrews were cured by looking to the serpent of brass, the sin-stricken soul is saved by looking to the uplifted, crucified Christ. The power of faith is in its object. To expect salvation without fixing the mind upon him who is mighty to save is vain; for, as Dr. Wm. C. Sadler has well said, "Eternity is not long enough to bring you what you desire, unless you seek it where it is to be found."

Here we touch the distinction between the subjective and the objective sides of religion. These are not exclusive, the one of the other. From the objective fact comes the subjective experience; from what is seen comes what is felt. The mystical is grounded in the external; faith is generated by an outward revelation. The experience of our salvation is from the Christ within us, but its ground is in the Christ without us. In his universal relations Christ is "the true light which lighteth every man coming into the world." But it is by faith in the life that he lived and the death he died that his love becomes enthroned in our hearts, and his spirit wrought out in our lives.

To maintain the balance between the sub-

jective and the objective sides of truth should be the object of our constant endeavor. We are to be much on the inside, but not dwell there. We are to think much of ourselves, but are not to forget God, or our brother man. In short, we are to live a well-rounded life, in which the inner and the outer things shall blend into one harmonious whole.

AFFIRMATIONS.

I will look out oftener than I look in.

I will examine myself in the light of God's most holy word.

I will scrutinize my motives, and will not allow my self-complacency to hoodwink my judgment.

I will turn from the vision of myself to the vision of the merciful, redeeming Christ.

CHAPTER VI

FEAR AND ITS ANTIDOTES

Fear is one of the most destructive forces in the world. It demoralizes the strongest natures, and casts a blight upon life's fairest joys. It is one of the most fruitful causes of disease. A sudden shock of fear will throw the whole bodily system out of order. It will change the secretions of the body; it will turn the milk of a nursing mother into poison.

For the most part fear is unreasonable. It is connected with the mysterious and the unknown, and usually springs from ignorance. We fear what we do not know, not merely for what it is, but for what it may portend.

"Imagination frames events unknown
In wild, fantastic shapes of hideous ruin,
And what it fears creates."

—HANNAH MORE.

Savage tribes live in constant fear. They people the unseen world around them with evil powers whom they seek to propitiate. Science has dispelled many of our fears. It

has come to us when we were like children crying in the night, and by lighting the lamp of knowledge has shown us there is nothing in the dark to harm us. Yet fear persists in returning. We fondly think that we have banished it, having reasoned ourselves out of it by convincing ourselves of its utter groundlessness, when lo, it suddenly looms up before us in the shape of some awful impending calamity. We have a vague apprehension that something direful is about to happen. What it is we cannot tell; nor can we give a reason for our feeling regarding it. But there it is, shadowing life, and nailing our feet to the ground.

Emancipation from the thralldom of fear is one part of Christ's salvation. We ascribe to modern civilization what we ought to ascribe to Him. He has taken from the world the fear of the unseen future which rested upon it like a pall. Wherever his influence has gone fear has vanished. The world has become a more comfortable place to live in because the specter of fear has been destroyed by the brightness of his coming.

In the present day there is a great deal of shallow teaching regarding the overcoming of fear. We are admonished not to fear, and to

deny the existence of anything that may prove a ground for fear. And so we go on our way, like a boy passing through a dark wood, whistling to keep his courage up. All of which is very foolish. For the question will arise, *Why* should we not fear? Through the Bible there runs, like a thread of gold, the oft-repeated refrain, "Fear not," but along with it there is always given some valid reason why we should not fear. Take three typical instances; and first, take the blessed promise, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." (Isa. 41:10.) Here we have a rational ground for the absence of fear. However keenly we may *feel* the evil that presses upon us we have no reason to *fear* it with God at our side to strengthen and uphold us. How different this from the inane "Fear nots," which have nothing behind them. Or, take the words, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." (Gen. 15:1.) With God for our shield we have an impregnable defence. His presence is between us and all possible harm. With him as our unseen protector we are as safe as a butterfly under

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a glass case when a sparrow darts upon it, and cannot reach it. With God surrounding us fear is baseless. Take also the words, "Fear not, I have redeemed thee, and called thee by name; thou art mine." (Isa. 43:1.) Here we have three reasons for the absence of fear—the experience of God's past deliverances, the assurance of his perfect knowledge of us and our affairs, and the acknowledgment of his creative responsibility. He pledges himself to support us in every trial, or bring us through it.

Fear will not depart at our bidding, but let us face every evil that threatens us, looking to God as our helper, our protector, and our deliverer, and it will melt away into thin air.

In summing up, we point out the three great antidotes to fear:

1. *Knowledge.* Many fears vanish when we examine into that which produced them. The story is told of a farmer walking along the road one misty morning, when approaching him was a terrible monster whose appearance froze his heart with terror. When he came up to it, what was his astonishment to find that it was his own brother, whom the morning mist had magnified and distorted. Many of our fears are just as needless as that.

When we come up to the thing that created them we smile and pass on. Often the fear turns out to be a blessing in disguise. The disciples feared as they entered the cloud on the mount of transfiguration, but when once folded within it, with their glorified Lord, their fears were gone. So it is with life's trials. We see them approach us as lowering, threatening clouds, and the warm currents of life within us are congealed; but when they really come, we are sustained by some unseen power, and when they pass and we come to see that the things we dreaded turn out to be blessings unspeakable, we are ashamed that we should have harbored fear in our hearts for a single moment. Afterward, we may, like the disciples on the mount, speak of that moment of temporary eclipse as the most transcendently glorious experience in our lives.

"The blessed clouds," exclaimed a wise old lady, "why should we fear them? What would we do without them? There is rain in them."

"Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take!
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and will break
In blessings on your head."

2. *Love.* "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear" (I John 4:18). When love is in the heart there is no room for fear. Love and fear are antagonistic; they are mutually exclusive; when the one is in the other is out.

Fill the world with love and you will banish fear. When men come to love one another they will cease to fear one another. When men come to love God they will cease to fear him. "He that feareth," says John, "is not made perfect in love." When love has perfect possession of any one fear will go.

3. *Faith.* This is fear's chief antidote. We might safely say that all fear is rooted in a distrust of God and his good providence. If we believe that the rule of the world is not divided between God and the devil, that this is God's world, and that he rules over it alone, what have we to fear whatever betide us? The future is safe because it is in his hands. Even death itself we will not dread when we remember that the gentle Lord of Love, in whom we trust, is king of the unseen realm. The fear of death, which casts its dark and chilly shadow over life's sunniest hours, Christ has dispelled. He partook of our common humanity "that through death

he might bring to naught him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15). The changed attitude of the world in reference to death is due to Him. Because of what he has told us we no longer dread death, although we may still dread dying. Looking beyond those shores of time we can say:

"I know not where His islands lift
 Their fronded palms in air;
 I only know I cannot drift
 Beyond His love and care.

And so beside the Silent Sea
 I wait the muffled oar;
 No harm from Him can come to me
 On ocean or on shore."

It is the distinctive mission of the Church of Christ to banish fear. She is to rebuke it; battle against it; exterminate it. Those who belong to Christ's Church are to show that God hath not given them the "spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Tim. 1:7). There is only one thing they are to fear, and that is sin. The man who does not fear sin is a fool. He is like

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a child who is afraid of shadows, but not of realities; of ghosts, but not of fire. But nothing else in all God's universe has the trusting soul reason to fear. And that fear also is taken away when a penitent spirit nestles in the bosom of Infinite and Eternal Mercy.

AFFIRMATIONS.

- I will fear no evil, for God is with me.
- I will not fear the evil that I feel.
- I will banish from me the fear of fear.
- I will put God between me and every evil.

CHAPTER VII

THE FOLLY OF WORRY

The folly of worry is seen in this, that it does not keep us out of trouble, and it increases the weight of those troubles which we have to bear. It alters nothing, and unfits us to meet the trials and annoyances which are inevitable. It is one of the things which all deplore, and which few have the temerity to attempt to justify.

A Christian has no business to get within "the vicious worry circle," much less to stay in it. He has no business to magnify trifles, and brood over imaginary evils. When his face is seamed with "low-thoughted care"; when corrosive anxieties eat away his happiness, he is belying his Christian profession. Trace his worry to its source and it will be found to spring from a sinful distrust of God and of his loving Providence.

Among the things which Jesus gives to those who come to him, and open themselves to his influence, is freedom from worry. He

imparts a sweet serenity of spirit which nothing can disturb; a serenity unruffled by surface storms, being "too deep for sound or foam," and unclouded by the dread of anything awful to come. When he said to his followers, "My peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful," Gethsemane was only about an hour distant. He saw the angry storm approaching which was soon to overwhelm him, yet he remained unperturbed. Never for a moment did he lose his poise, or suffer his spirit to be moved. He was master of himself, the victor and not the victim of his circumstances. His self-conquest was complete. The battle he then won he won for us, so as to communicate to us something of his own triumphant calm when facing the agonizing crises of life.

The sublime tranquillity of Jesus came from his quiet trustfulness of God touching the future. No shadow of doubt ever fell upon his soul with regard to the Father's love and care, or with regard to the final outworking of the Father's purpose in the world. He had unshakable faith in the providence of God in his own life, in the success of his mission, and in the establishment of God's

kingdom on earth. He faced the future without fear because sustained by faith. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks of him as "the captain" (or leader) "of our faith" (12:2). He walked the way of faith before us to draw us after him, by bringing to bear upon us the contagion of his own heroic leadership. Following him we are freed from inward disquietude, and are enabled to live care-free lives. We are sure of the future when we are sure of Him.

There is perhaps no greater test of faith than that which comes from the sense of insecurity in connection with mundane affairs. While this sense of insecurity has never been altogether absent from life, it perhaps has never been felt more keenly than in this industrial age. The economic disturbance is frightful. The air is filled with impalpable apprehensions. Business men do not know where they are at, or where to turn, for at any moment a mine may be sprung beneath their feet. Workingmen are in constant dread of being cast out upon the rubbish heap. If for any reason they are jolted off the labor wagon, they find increased difficulty in getting on again. The passing of the dead line of fifty, and the consequent closing, one

by one, of the doors of opportunity, fills them with dismay. All alike are victims of a vicious system, and are involved in the insecurity which it breeds. To escape from it altogether is impossible.

In the time of Jesus life was much less complex than it is today. Many of the perplexing problems which now confront us were then unknown. The life of Jesus itself was of the simplest. He went through the world empty-handed, never feeling the necessity of accumulating more than was needed from day to day. He was entirely free from domestic and business responsibilities. The petty anxieties which fill some lives to the brim were absent from his experience. Because of his immunity from these things many have difficulty in seeing how he can be for us a perfect example; but we have to remember that it is the spirit of his life rather than its outward form that we are called upon to copy. What we are to imitate above all is his faith—which was the most dominant quality, and the most powerful formative force in his life.

We have to take his teachings in the same broad way, following them in the spirit rather than in the letter. Take, for instance,

the rule of action which he lays down in the words, "Take no thought for the morrow." It is not to be taken literally. It does not forbid the exercise of forethought, but of anxious worrying thought. It simply means, Do not borrow trouble; do not cross the bridge before you come to it; trust and wait, leave the future with God; take material things for granted, and go on to the pursuit of higher things. This thought he expands in the words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

"Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find him in the evil days
Of all-sufficient strength and guide.
Who trusts in God's unchanging love
Builds on the rock that naught can move."

It is this sense of the Father's foreseeing love which "quiets the restless pulse of care," and takes out of life all fret and worry. "They that trust in the Lord are as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth forever" (Psalm 125:1).

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AFFIRMATIONS.

I will pitch my tent upon the heights above the cloud line of worry.

I will trust the unknown for the known.

When the journals are heated I will pause until they cool.

I will cast all my care upon Him who careth for me.

Under the wing of the Almighty my fluttered soul will quietly rest in the time of trouble.

CHAPTER VIII

THE UPWARD LOOK

Never perhaps was there greater need than at present for cultivating the upward look. If the world has become more attractive than it ever was, it is not one whit more satisfying or more certain. The help and comfort which man needs in the hour of his weakness and sorrow come from fixing his gaze upon the things which are above.

Heaven is above—not in a geographical, but in a spiritual sense. It bends over us; it presses down upon us; it keeps in vital connection with us, ceaselessly pouring itself into our hearts, and into the life of the world. Connection with this super-sensible sphere, to which we instinctively look up when we pray, and from which the best things in life come down, gives to all the common things in our human life a new value.

The world in which many people live is a very small one. They are like the insect to which the leaf upon which it crawls is the

whole universe. They do not look far enough. Their horizon is bounded by the things of sense; heaven is to them vague, shadowy, and spectral. Their eyes are earthward bent; and they go on through life missing the vision that would change their sighing into songs, their night into day.

A Scotch peasant and his wife emigrated to Canada, cleared a bit of forest, built their log cabin, and sowed their crop in a small clearing. One evening, when the husband returned from his work in the woods, he found his wife sitting on the doorstep weeping bitterly. "What's wrang wi' ye, my woman?" he asked. "I canna see oot," she answered. "No," he replied with sympathy in his voice, "but ye can see *up*;" and he pointed her to the circle of heaven that, like a great blue eye, looked down upon her from above. Now there are times with all of us when we cannot see out, but there is no time when we cannot see up. If the outlook be sometimes dark, the uplook is always bright; if the outlook be sometimes narrow, the uplook is always wide; if we are shut in by life's troubles, we can look to the open heaven above us; if things of the outer world are forbidding and foreboding, we can catch glimpses

of the glories of the upper realm. "From a small window," says Carlyle, "we can see the infinite."

Not only is heaven above, God is above. "Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). The heathen located their gods on earth's high places. The gods of the Greeks dwelt on Mount Olympus, within visiting distance, but they could not be depended upon; their visits were uncertain, their spirits capricious. Falling back upon this conception, while connecting it with a clearer vision and a more certain faith, the Jewish worshiper exclaimed, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the mountains; from whence shall my help come? My help cometh from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth" (Ps. 121:1). Above the mountains, to the highest heaven Jesus has taught us to look, and there find enthroned in light one to whom we can pray, "Our Father which art in heaven;" and praying thus, can sing:

"O little heart of mine, shall pain
Or sorrow make thee moan,
When all this God is all for thee,
A Father all thine own?"

The upward look is the sovereign cure for all earth's sorrow and gloom. An Old Testament writer, speaking of darkened souls from whom the light of hope had faded out, says, "They looked unto him and were radiant" (Psalm 34:5). Their upturned faces caught the glory which streamed down from the face of God. Being radiant, they radiated. The joy, and peace, and strength, and hope which they received they gave out to others—sometimes unconsciously, as in the case of Moses, who when he came down from the mount "wist not that his face shone"; at other times consciously, as when they released power in prayer and service by the act of the will. But whether consciously or unconsciously exercised, the power that radiated from them was power derived from God; the light that rayed out from them was a reflection of the light of love which came down upon them. They were transformed by the vision of God which they beheld. Reflecting his glory, as in a mirror, they were changed into the same image.

It depends upon what the soul's eyes see what the result of its looking will be. Let anyone turn his gaze toward a cloud, and a shadow will fall upon his face; let him turn it

upon the sun and he will be bathed in light. One-half of the moon is in darkness while the other half is shining. Why? Because it is turned away from the sun. The reason why we walk in darkness is not because the sun of God's love is eclipsed, but because we have turned away our faces from him. God is the sun of our souls, and they who look to him "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

Uncertain of God, timid of faith, Epictetus exclaimed, "Dare to look up." That was the best a heathen sage could say. The call of the Christ to look up is not a dare, but an invitation, an entreaty, yea, a command. His mission to earth was to lead man to look heavenward and Godward. He revealed to them their Father in heaven, that in the light of his unchanging, eternal love they might become radiant and shining witnesses of his transforming power.

The upward look is something to be practised. The eye of the soul has a downward droop, and has to be trained to look upward. The world of sense is tangible and attractive, and its downward pull, which is as steady as the law of gravitation, can be overcome only by catching a vision of the glory that streams

down from the upper realm. When that vision is seen the soul that has cleaved to the dust is drawn upward, and has its place in the sun.

AFFIRMATIONS.

I will look up and not down.

I will fix my gaze upon Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of his person.

I will shine in Christ's reflected light.

The light which I receive from Him I will radiate upon others.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRAYER OF REALIZATION

Within the New Thought circles the view of prayer which generally prevails is that it consists simply of claiming the thing promised by God, or desired by man, and acting as if it were already in hand, or on the way. With this view there would be unmixed satisfaction were it not unfortunately so often accompanied by the elimination from prayer of the elements of communion and petition, and also a naïve ignoring of the process which leads up to the result. The fruit is plucked and appropriated by those who have no use for the tree that bore it.

Psychologically considered, "the prayer of realization," or, if you will, the realization of prayer—that is, the realization of its objects and ends—is reached by the following stages:

1. *Desire.*

Desire is embryonic prayer. God is said to "hear the *desires* of the humble." He hears them before they are voiced in words.

Weak desire makes weak praying; strong desire makes strong praying. The revelation of need affords the stimuli by which desire is awakened and intensified, and only when desire is deep and keen does prayer become importunate.

2. *Aspiration.*

Desire is outbreathed; it expresses itself in outreach and upreach. What the soul desires it endeavors to obtain. "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after." The soul in prayer is not passive—lying open to God as a plowed field to the rain; it actively seeks after God, pressing into his presence, and reaching out the hand to receive the promised blessing. Prayer is sending the soul into the invisible in the great adventure of finding God.

3. *Petition.*

From aspiration prayer passes into petition or supplication—the direct asking of things from God, either for ourselves or for others. Prayer is more than desire; it is more than the reaching of the heart after God; it is presenting to him specific requests. It is not enough to cultivate a prayerful spirit; we must have speech with God; we must hear

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his voice and speak to him in return; we must seek audience with him for a distinct purpose. We must come to him as suppliants, having some definite favor to ask from his hand. This he encourages us to do. He "waits to be gracious." He delights in our fellowship. He is more ready to give than we are to receive. His attitude toward every suppliant soul is expressed in the words, "What wilt thou, that I will do unto thee?"

4. *Anticipation.*

There is an anticipatory element in prayer. When a thing is desired, sought after, and asked for, it is anticipated. Something is expected to happen in answer to prayer. God being taken at his word, there is a calm and watchful waiting for the fulfillment of his promise.

5. *Realization.*

This is the last stage in the process. The thing looked forward to has come into sight; faith has at length reached fruition; the blessing anticipated is claimed, appropriated and realized. The praying soul lays the hand of faith upon it, saying, "It is mine," and entering into its possession, lives in the enjoyment of it.

Is the application of this principle to be made without any restriction or qualification whatsoever? Are we warranted to claim as already ours anything that we may desire? There are those who, far from staggering at the greatness of the difficulties involved, take literally the Master's words: "All things whatsoever ye ask and pray for, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24); forgetting that no such promise can be absolute in its sweep; but it is to be interpreted in the light of the whole tenor of our Lord's teaching, which clearly shows that God never promises to give *indiscriminatingly* all things whatsoever we ask and pray for, but only those things which are in harmony with his will. There are many things which we in our ignorance may ask which he mercifully denies. He gives all things which he in his wisdom and love sees to be best for us to have. Whatever is right to desire is right to ask; and whatever is best to have God will give.

Is this a cancellation of the Master's promise? By no means. It is simply an explanation of it. It harmonizes these words of his not alone with the general teaching of Scripture, but with what takes place in actual ex-

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perience. We well know that claiming a thing and attempting to take it over does not make it ours unless God's consignment of it to us coincides with our part in the transaction. If it is in his will that we should have it, it will be ours, but not otherwise. And what true child of his would ask for anything more than that his will should be done in answer to his prayer?

Therefore, in one respect only is that promise absolute, and that is in regarding the words "all things whatsoever" as receiving fulfillment in the will of God. Every prayer lying outside of his will falls to the ground. To one who prays aright it matters not whether the particular thing asked for be granted or withheld, so that God's will be done; for that is the bottom desire, which underlies all others, in true prayer. To lose ourselves in God's will is to come to the end of all torturing anxiety and uncertainty; for if his will is done the essential thing in our prayer has been realized.

When prayer reaches realization it ought to pass into praise; for what can afford greater ground for joy and thankfulness than the working out of the divine will in prayer? When the thing prayed for is attained, prayer

for it ought to cease, for the reason that it is unseemly to keep asking over and over again for that which is already ours. And in its turn, the changing of prayer into praise will lead to the confirming of our faith, by setting the seal of the soul to the fact that prayer has been answered, thus bringing our prayer to a still greater fulness of realization.

AFFIRMATIONS.

Above me an open heaven, and a listening Father.
Around me a bounteous world administered for my benefit.

Within me the sweet assurance that no desire outbreathed in prayer will return void, if within the will of Him who knows and loves me best.

CHAPTER X

ADJUSTING THE BALANCE

Any "thought" movement is apt to become spiritually sterile unless it is balanced by active participation in some form of beneficent human ministry. We keep saying that thoughts are real, substantial things; that while we cannot see them, or measure them, or weigh them, we can feel them pull, and prod, and push; but we sometimes forget that they have no compelling power, and that they cannot influence us except we yield to them. When they urge us forward in the right way, we can resist them, and hold back. As Paul puts it, we can "hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18); that is, hold the truth at arms' length that we may continue in unrighteousness. Many do this. They play fast and loose with the truth; they accept it, and admire it, but they do not allow it to operate. And what are new thoughts worth if they do not stir up new impulses that issue in a new life? And what

are good thoughts worth if they do not stir up good impulses that issue in a good life? A man may have a bright intellect and have a bad heart; he may contend for the truth while living a lie; he may be sound in the faith while rotten in his life. Thought is not the final thing. It is not an end, but a means to an end; and if its end is not reached, what doth it profit?

St. James in his Epistle presents the other side of religion. In giving the only direct definition of it to be found in the New Testament, he says: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (1:27). In the present day there is among Christian people a strong reaction from the intellectual conception of religion which formerly prevailed, to the position of James. The earth-side of religion is being emphasized. Sociology is taking the place of theology. Men are not asking, What do you think of God? so much as they are asking, What are you doing for men? In this change of front there is no small gain. Religion has been brought down from the clouds, and has been made a practical thing—a thing not

of the future world merely, but primarily a thing of the world that now is. The pressing social and industrial problems which good men everywhere have been forced to face have centered their attention upon things pertaining to the betterment of the condition of the toiling masses. Never were so many people girding themselves for the task of lightening the heavy burdens of the less fortunate classes; never was more being done to provide for them the means of physical comfort and spiritual improvement; never was more honest effort made to bring them to their own, and so make this world a better place to live in.

But while this change is cause for gratification, there remains the fear lest, in our eagerness to redress outstanding wrongs, we should fail rightly to adjust the balance of truth. A sad thing will it be for the world if God be left out of thoughts, or if there is given to him a secondary place. The workmen of today need God first. They need a better knowledge of God more than they need better wages, better houses, better clothes, and better food. In the whole life of men there is nothing more vital and important than true thoughts of God, and unless

they think right thoughts about him, unless they discern in all things his purpose of redemption, and endeavor to bring the world into harmony with it, all their beautiful schemes of social and industrial reform will come to naught.

The Church, which is the body of Christ, is the medium through which he works. She is the appointed mediator between God and man. Her special task is to bring God to man, and man to God. With one hand she is to reach up and take hold upon God, with the other reach out and minister to man. She must not forget to look around upon the field of her service, nor must she forget to look up to the source of her inspiration; she must not neglect to cultivate practical benevolence toward man; nor must she neglect to keep in view the God for whose sake her works of love are done. Without the mighty impulse to social service which thoughts of God alone can bring, humanitarianism will become mechanical and superficial. To work for man without the uplift which comes from thoughts of God is like attempting to fly without wings. By thoughts of God altruistic activities are fed. For anyone to say that he is so much absorbed in practical

things that he has no time to think, or pray, is much the same as for him to say that he is so busied with the duties of life that he has no time to eat or to breathe. Nothing is more potent, nothing more practical, than an open-minded, open-hearted consideration of the question, "What do I think of God?" When that question is satisfactorily answered, there will follow the complementary question, "What am I doing for man?" Godward thinking, if it has its way, will always lead to manward doing. Right thinking, if faithfully followed, will always lead to right living.

AFFIRMATIONS.

I must *do* right as well as *think* right.

I must let the truth have full course in my soul that it may be glorified in my life.

I am a citizen of two worlds, and have interests in both.

My duties to God do not conflict with my duties to my fellow-men.

CHAPTER XI

REPOSE—AND HOW TO GET IT

A mistake which many of the modern cults fall into consists in making repose a mechanical thing, something to be acquired by practice, like playing upon the piano. The substance of their teaching is, Calm yourself; breathe deeply; relax your taut muscles; cease from struggling, and let yourself go, and you will find repose. Yes, you may find repose of body in that way, and indirectly gain a measure of mental repose—and that means a great deal to one who is suffering from nervous overstrain. But such instruction does not go deep enough. It does not reach the depth of the soul's need; it does not calm the troubled waters of a sorrowful heart; it does not ease the burden of a guilty conscience; it does not give the peace that passeth understanding. What we need is an experience of Christ's comforting love that will give rest to the soul when the body is racked with pain; that will give steadiness of poise under life's yokes and burdens; and that will give an inward stillness and tranquillity

“when all without tumultuous seems”—a rest which will be, in short, like the center of calm at the heart of a cyclone. Such a rest cannot come from a change in outward conditions, but must have its source within the soul, and must consist in the removal of that which is the cause of all disturbance.

There is a spurious kind of repose which comes from mental numbness. All questioning and reasoning are given up, and the soul simply floats on the stream, or an opiate is taken which puts the soul to sleep. The result is a dull, bovine insensibility which Virgil describes as “most like indeed to death’s own quietness,” and which ends in the rest of Nirvana. This is not the rest which Christ gives. His rest is positive, not negative; active, not passive; a tonic, not an opiate. It is rest in the spirit’s deepest depths; rest which is unbroken when facing the disturbing facts of life; rest which nothing can destroy because it is founded upon Him who is the world’s fixed center. Everyone possessing it can sing out of the heart of the storm:

“I smiled to think that God’s completeness flowed
around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest.”

We are apt to think that never was the world's unrest greater than now. But unrest is a race condition, and is not confined to any particular time or place. This world has always been full of disquietude and disturbance. Yet whatever the present may be compared to the past, it is generally conceded to be restless in an emphatic degree. Having become more self-conscious and sensitive, it has become more restive under its burdens. Its unrest is deep and wide, and affects every part of man's complex life, and finds its way into every corner of the globe.

The restless West is disturbing the peace of the slumbering East, and prodding it into activity. The peace of stagnation is being hopelessly broken. Points of friction are becoming more numerous and acute. Everything within the intellectual, social, political, and religious spheres is in a state of ferment, and we are anxiously waiting and watching for the process to be completed, and wondering why it is so long continued. The modern spirit of scientific inquiry has come in as a disturbing element. It has pulverized many existing theories, and has put us under the necessity of constructing better ones. The revolt against poverty; the demand for a

higher standard of living, and for new values of life, have brought about economic changes, and the demands of our enlarging life increase faster than our power to gratify them. We have more comforts, but less comfort; we are better off, but we are less satisfied. As another has said, "It is not the high cost of living, but the cost of high living that worries us." We are living too fast, the pace is killing us. We pursue our pleasures in a hot-footed way. The travel fever is in the blood, and we foolishly attempt to extinguish its inward fires by pouring oil upon them. Seventy-five per cent. of our diseases are functional disorders of the nervous system, a proportion never known before in the history of the race. Americans are the chief sufferers. As a people we are fast coming to a place where calmness of the spirit, which is a true index of power, is practically unknown.

The problems before us in the present day are how to maintain repose of spirit in the midst of these conditions; how to stand in the midst of life's mad whirl,

"Serene, and resolute, and still,
And calm, and self-possessed."

Much may be gained by keeping a firm hold upon ourselves; but that is not enough, for at the touch of some great tragedy our self-sufficiency may vanish. We can find abiding tranquillity only when the soul is centered upon God. St. Augustine was the mouth-piece of the race when he exclaimed, "O God, thou hast made us for Thyself; and we are forever restless until we find our rest in Thee." Faith in God is the door of the temple of peace. A life of trust is a life of repose. "We who have believed do enter into rest."

Connected with the aeroplane there is a recent invention called a "stabilizer," which corrects its erratic movements, and keeps it in the proper course in spite of the strong and treacherous air-currents with which it has to contend. In the life of the spirit faith in the eternal, unchanging God is our great stabilizer. It steadies us, and keeps us in our appointed path, enabling us to steer right onward in the teeth of every storm, and to triumph over every obstacle that might deflect us from our course.

Before sin-tossed and care-tossed souls the Christ forever stands, as the representative of the Eternal Father, saying, "Come unto

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me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That he has "all the religious value of God" and is able to make his promise good, Christian experience abundantly testifies. There is rest *from* him, and *in* him; rest where he is; rest within the circle of his fellowship.

"There is a secret place of rest
God's saints alone can know,
Thou shalt not find it East or West
Though seeking to and fro.
A cell where Jesus is the door,
His love the only key,
Who enters will go out no more
But there with Jesus be."

—*The Inner Life.*

Goethe has said, "On every mountain height is rest." Rather let us say, With Christ on every mountain height is rest. It is only when the mountain height is a place of divine communion that it is a place of rest. If a man goes there by himself, and in the silence hears no voice, and in the solitude sees no face, the mountain height will be to him an empty place; but if he finds Christ there, it will be to him a place of vision and transfiguration. In His companionship the

petty cares and trials that buzzed around him in the valley will be forgotten; he will be above the cloudline of trouble and the noise of the city from which he has fled will seem very far away.

The rest, which with all our striving we have failed to obtain, Christ bestows upon us as a free gift. He can give it because he has it to give. He says, "My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth give I unto you." Not merely a peace like his, but the very peace which he himself possesses; a peace that is part of his own, as a drop of water is part of the ocean, or a ray of light is part of the sun, is the great and satisfying gift with which he fills our weary, troubled hearts.

To receive the gift of Christ's own restfulness of spirit we must come to him, enter into personal relation with him, and make the great venture of putting ourselves, and all the complicated interests of our lives, into his hands. When that is done there will be an inward tranquillity of soul whose surface may at times be ruffled, but whose hidden depths no element of disturbance can e'er invade.

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AFFIRMATIONS.

It has been given to me to possess an eternal Sabbath of the soul.

Sinking into the everlasting arms, my spirit finds repose.

The rest that God bestows when not rest *from* trouble is rest *in* trouble.

With my feet upon the Rock of Ages I stand unmoved while life's wild restless sea surges around me.

CHAPTER XII

HEALTH AND RELIGION

A well known novelist represents one of his characters as saying that the stars are like "apples on the trees—most of them splendid and sound, a few of them blighted." This world is one of the blighted ones. It has been blighted by sickness. There has always been sickness in it. Up to the present time sickness has been the lot of all. No way of escape from it has yet been found. It is part of the present scheme of things. The prophet Isaiah, looking down into the future, saw a happy condition of things in which "the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick"; but that ideal state is still far away.

Yet sickness is an intruder. We are constantly battling with it to expel it from the world. It is one of the disturbing elements that militate against man's happiness, and that must pass away when a perfect state is reached. Take the word disease itself. As its form indicates, it means dis-ease, or the

absence of ease. It is a disturbing element in life. Health is harmony, disease is discord; health is wholeness, disease is a break in the order of life. To be cured of disease is to have the unity of life restored.

In these days of multiplied healing cults, which mushroomlike spring up in a night, nothing is more urgently needed than a careful study of the laws according to which the power to heal operates. To understand these laws we must first of all get to the cause of the disease. Now, the principal cause of disease is sin. We have sick bodies because we have sinful souls. Disease came into the world with sin and will go out with sin. The real blight from which the world is suffering is the blight of sin, and sickness is only a surface symptom of a deeper malady. But besides the primal cause of sin there are proximate causes; and it is with these that ones diagnosis of any particular case has mainly to do.

Speaking generally, some diseases have a *physical* root, being caused by the infraction of some physical law; others have a *mental* root, being caused by the infraction of some mental law; still others have a *moral* root, being caused by the infraction of some moral

law. But seldom is the explanation quite so simple. Things do not always go in a straight line. They frequently overlap. Hence we have physical diseases which are to be traced to a mental root, and diseases of mind and body which spring from a moral root. Yet taken in the large, the classification will stand.

The first class of diseases, then, to be considered are those which are purely physical, being produced by physical causes, and cured only by physical remedies. Sometimes they may be directly traced to germs, bad sanitation, want of sunlight, improper nourishment, or a vicious heredity. Over this class of causes the mind has no power. They are as impervious to suggestion as a decayed tooth; prayer is as impotent to reach them as when taken as a substitute for a surgical operation. A very pathetic and somewhat humorous instance of this kind was furnished by a staid and goodly deacon, who became afflicted with a serious mental trouble, and manifested certain depraved tendencies. The obscene language which poured from his lips shocked his friends. His former life had been pure, and the only conclusion they could come to was that he had become possessed with an unclean devil. Prayer was offered for the ex-

orcising of the evil spirit, but to no avail. He was sent to a neighboring sanitarium, where he fell into the hands of a skillful physician, a thoroughgoing materialist, who believed that all moral maladies were to be traced to physical causes. Upon a careful study of the case he made the discovery that at one time the deacon had received a puncture of the skull, and he became convinced that all his mental and moral disturbance came from pressure upon one of the nerve-centers of the brain. An operation was resorted to, with the result that a small tumor was discovered and removed. Upon its removal all the painful disturbance ceased, and his former calm and moral selfhood was restored. Not knowing what had happened, his pastor and a few friends went to the sanitarium to pray for him, when they were met by the medical superintendent, who said, "Gentlemen, you were quite right; the good deacon was possessed of a devil, but I have captured him, and put him into a bottle; and if you will come into my office I will show him to you." They went in, and were shown the tumor which had been extracted from the deacon's brain; and the deacon himself they found restored to his right mind—his

temporary aberration having passed away like an ugly dream.

Here apparently was a complete demonstration of the doctor's position that man is simply an animal, and that all mental maladies are to be traced to physical causes. What it did not prove is that man is an animal *only*. A half truth was substituted for a whole truth; a universal conclusion was drawn from a particular premise. It is just as true that there are multitudes of cases, described by physicians as neurasthenic, where physical ailments can unquestionably be traced to mental causes. The former require the service of a physician; the latter call for the services of a true "cure of souls" who can "minister to a mind diseased."

Psychic disturbance suggests psychic treatment. Man is a unit, composed of body and soul, and the soul itself may be sick, and may need attention first. There are multitudes of cases which material remedies cannot reach, for the reason that they do not go deep enough. The springs of life are within, and from within life is to be renewed. When one's thoughts have been allowed to run along hurtful lines, the lever has to be reversed so as to turn them in a new direction. From

gloomy thoughts the mind must be wrenched, and fixed upon things that are hopeful and happy. As soon as this is done the tide of new life will begin to flow in; the skies will clear, and the equilibrium which is the condition of perfect health will be recovered.

In the third class of cases, where disease is traceable to moral causes, only moral medicine will avail. Diagnosing the case of the paralytic whom he cured at the pool of Bethesda, the Great Physician clearly indicated, in the counsel with which he dismissed him, that his physical infirmity was the result of his sinful life. "Go and sin no more," he said, "lest a worse thing befall thee" (John 5:14); suggesting that a repetition of his former sinful indulgence would be followed by an increased harvest of physical weakness. Sensual indulgence is the tap-root of disease. "Just disease on luxury succeeds," and it follows at the heels of every evil habit. Bad living shortens life. The wicked man "does not live half his days," but of the good man, the Lord himself hath said, "with long life will I satisfy him."

But while the general relation of sickness to sin is obvious enough, when we come to particular instances it is always dangerous to

attribute them to specific sins. Upon a certain occasion Jesus was asked: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he should be born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither." The explanation lay elsewhere. Nevertheless, instances might be adduced in which children have suffered on account of their parents. The law of heredity often works in that way. A grandfather's gluttony may be his grandson's gout. It is not always possible, however, to trace the stream to its source. Complete immunity from disease no one has ever yet achieved. Hence to say, "As a child of God you are not subject to sickness" is to run counter to the facts of life. We know that God's spiritual children are often sick, and that the holiest of them sometimes suffer most; but we know also that God's healing power is ever in exercise; and that in the bosom of his love his sick child can find consolation and health. We speak of *divine* healing, as if there was healing of any other sort. All healing is divine. All life is from God, the source of life. Whatever may be the means employed it is God who heals. "I am the Lord who healeth thee," is the statement of a universal truth.

God wants to heal; he is waiting to heal.

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Through every channel that is open to him he is ready to pour his life-giving energy into the bodies and souls of men. "I dressed the wound," said an eminent Surgeon; "and God healed it." So anxious is he to convey his healing power to his suffering children that he will accommodate himself to their ignorance and superstition; working for them from within outwards, or from outwards within, as they elect; demanding only three things: to wit, that they put absolute trust in his healing power; that they leave the disposal of every case in his hands; and that to the limit of their ability they coöperate with him in working out the ends desired.

AFFIRMATIONS.

My springs are in God.

Whatever is in God for anyone is in God for me.

God is to me an ever-open, ever-flowing fountain of life and health.

God is seeking to repair what is broken in me that I may become "every whit whole," and to supply what is lacking that I may become a perfect man.

CHAPTER XIII

TRUE OPTIMISM

There is an easy-going optimism that delights in repeating the words of Browning:—

“God’s in his heaven—
All’s right with the world.”

Browning himself supplies a commentary on these words, which is better than the text itself. He says, “I hold not with the pessimist that all things are ill, nor with the optimist that all things are well. All things are not ill, and all things are not well, but all things shall be well because this is God’s world.” We all know that there is much in this world that is wrong; much that is contrary to the will of God, much that militates against the highest welfare of man. But this is God’s world; and he is in it working to put all things right; and somehow we have the confidence that he will ultimately succeed in putting them right.

True optimism is not blind. It does not re-

fuse to consider the ugly, unpleasant facts of life. Nor does it cry out, "Peace! Peace!" when there is no peace—ostrich-wise burying its head in the sand, and foolishly imagining itself to be safe because it does not see its danger. It neither denies nor ignores the facts, but faces them frankly; taking due account of the strength of antagonistic forces, and of the dangers and difficulties that beset the life of the times, yet believing that there is some way out; and that in the end every cloud will melt into sunshine, and every dark night of trouble end in glorious day.

In the spread of the spirit of optimism New Thought has played an important part. It takes an optimistic view of human nature, believing that in every man are lodged the forces necessary to his recovery and development; it takes an optimistic view of life, believing that it holds within it endless possibilities of improvement; it takes an optimistic view of the world, believing that the forces of good in it are adequate to overcome the forces of evil, and that the eternal right will prosper in the end. Where it has failed is in not discerning the ground of the very optimism which it so persistently cherishes.

Why should we be hopeful of human na-

ture? Why should we believe that good will be the final goal in life and history? It is not enough to say that things have been ordained to work out in that way. Some reason must be found for this propulsion toward the perfect. Christianity has its answer; and it is the only one that has an adequate reason to give for the very existence of optimism itself; or an adequate explanation to offer for the realization of its dreams. Because there is in human nature a power working for repair to which man can ally himself; because there is in the world a power working for redemption with which he can coöperate, there is good ground for hope, alike for the individual and for society. Once let the world be looked upon as a world with Christ in it, and it will not be seen as going to destruction, but as on its way to redemption. Once let the vision come of the Christ who died upon the Cross as now seated upon the throne, "from henceforth expecting until his enemies be made the footstool of his feet," and the future is assured. Slowly but surely all opposition must give way before him who is "going forth conquering and to conquer." The advancement of his kingdom may be accomplished by great waste; every victory may

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be won at terrible expense and sacrifice; but the prize will be worth the price.

It is frequently maintained that optimism is a matter of temperament; that there are some people who are natural optimists, just as there are others who are natural pessimists. They are made that way.

“Two men looked through prison bars,
The one saw mud, the other saw stars.”

Each followed his own bent, and saw what he was prepared to see. He had very largely made himself what he was. If anyone has the misfortune to have a black drop of melancholy in his blood, is he on that account doomed to lifelong pessimism? By no means. By careful discipline, by compelling himself to look habitually upon the brighter side of things, he may so completely conquer his natural proclivity as to become strongest where he is weakest. From being a pronounced pessimist he can be changed into the sunniest of optimists. To his own striving let him add the coöperating grace of Christ and the transformation will be complete. He will then become the very opposite of what he was by nature. “Old things will pass away,

and all things will become new." "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree: and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off." (Is. 55:13.)

AFFIRMATIONS.

Because today is better than yesterday I believe that tomorrow will be better than today.

Because good is stronger than evil, love than hate, I live in the sunny certainty that all will one day be well.

Because Christ loves and reigns I am confident that the world is on its way to redemption, and not to ruin.

CHAPTER XIV

THE POWER OF INITIATIVE

God has endowed man with something of his own creative power, so that within the sphere of morals he can originate change, shape his own character, and achieve his own destiny. As a moral being he possesses the power of initiative and referendum. He can do new things, unexpected things, for which he alone is responsible. Out of the midst of a host of claimants for his suffrage he can choose some, and reject others. In the exercise of his veto power he can vote one measure up and another measure down. To him, within the kingdom of the spirit, belongs imperial power.

Are his sovereign edicts always obeyed? Not always. For while as a moral being he possesses the power to will, as a finite and fallen being he often lacks "the will to power." He is often found sitting amidst the ruins of his former greatness, an uncrowned

king issuing empty mandates. "When he would do good evil is present with him." Power over himself he has, but not always power over his circumstances. He is often ringed around by an iron wall, through which he cannot break. Powerless to do, he is yet free to choose; his hands are tied, but his will is free; his body is in bondage, but his soul is his own; outwardly he may be a slave, while inwardly a king; outwardly a victim of fate, while inwardly crowned with victory.

"All that life needs for life," says Tennyson, "is possible to will." There are many things we would never think of willing, inasmuch as they obviously lie beyond our reach, or outside the sphere of obligation. Only the things that may and ought to be done come within the circle of legitimate choice. Man is a finite being; but within the bars of his cage he has all the freedom that is good for him to have, and all that he ought to desire.

But the will is more than a directing power; it is also a *driving* power—the dynamo of the soul. By its exercise a man may urge his reluctant feet to take the upward way; when tempted to self-indulgence he can compel himself to go against the grain of inclination, and do the thing which his better nature indicates;

when he is in danger of being overcome by inertia and lethargy he can stab his soul awake, and "exercise himself into godliness"; when the spirit of devotion burns low he can stir up the gift that is within him as one might stir up a slumbering fire; when he is beginning to relax his vigilance, and to let himself down to a lower plane of living, he can plunge his spurs into the flanks of his flagging resolution, and push on to higher things; when his mind is growing sluggish, and is in danger of becoming atrophied and decrepit, he can hold himself down to uncongenial tasks, with the grim determination of seeing them through; and when the old Adam within him squirms and protests as he is moved by some generous, noble impulse, he can *give* till he feels the pinch, and *work* till he feels the grind. If his will is feeble to begin with, he can grow a better one; and by resisting what is wrong, and doing what is right it will keep waxing stronger and stronger.

To bring man into harmony with His plan in his life God acts upon the will—the center of moral personality—applying to it the proper stimuli, so as to incite it to right action. His influence is suasive. He impels,

but does not compel. What he seeks is man's consent and coöperation. For that he works and waits. In the union of God and man we have two separate and independent wills co-operating to the accomplishment of the same end. Man's will does not sink into the divine and become lost in it, as the rain-drop that falls into the bosom of the ocean. When we say

"Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them Thine."

they do not cease to be our own because we have given them to God. If he controls them it is because we elect to have it so.

The union of divine and human action in the moral life is nowhere more clearly brought out than in the words of Paul: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). That is to say, Do your best for yourself, seeing that God is doing his best for you; work out your own salvation as if all depended upon yourself, but work it out hopefully, seeing you have an unseen ally who is working for you and in you that you may be enabled to will and to do his good pleasure.

THE POWER OF INITIATIVE 99

We often meet with those who take pride in being self-made men; but it is only in a very limited sense that any man is self-made. The little boy who told a visitor who boasted of that distinction, "Pa says you made a mistake when you did not get somebody else to help you," spoke wiser than he knew. We all need the help of someone else. There is, however, one thing to be said on the behalf of self-made men,—they relieve the Lord of a great deal of responsibility. Between these two extremes lies the whole truth. There is a sense in which every man is self-made or self-marred; there is another and deeper sense in which some men are God-made and God-redeemed. Ye are "God's workmanship"; God's finished product, said Paul, speaking of Christians generally. There is no need therefore to dispute the truth of the lines

"Man is the maker of immortal fate
Man falls by man, if finally he falls."

provided that at the same time we admit as equally true that if man finally falls, it is because he has failed to avail himself of the undergirding of divine power.

God's part in the work of character making

is never uncertain; man's part is. To come to his own man must call into exercise his God-given power of initiative. He cannot float into virtue; he cannot come into possession of his heavenly inheritance any more than he can come into possession of his earthly inheritance unless he lays his hands upon it. Nothing but disappointment will come to him if he assumes the attitude of calm passiveness represented in the lines:—

“Serene I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea,
I rave no more 'gainst time and fate,
For lo, mine own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid eternal ways,
And what is mine shall know my face.”

Imagine a business man talking in that way; folding his arms and waiting for something to turn up instead of going out and turning something up! It may be laid down as an axiom that in the outer and spiritual worlds alike, we get what we go after.

THE POWER OF INITIATIVE 101

AFFIRMATIONS.

As a free moral being I possess creative power.

No one can make me other than what I will myself to be.

My soul cannot die save as the result of spiritual suicide; my soul cannot live save as the result of my voluntary union with the Divine.

My highest freedom is found in obedience to divine law, my highest efficiency in union with Almighty Power.

CHAPTER XV

SELF-CONTROL *versus* DIVINE-CONTROL

In the reports of automobile accidents we are frequently told that the driver lost control of his machine. What really happened was that he lost control of himself. There is where the trouble started. And there is where the trouble starts in many of life's catastrophes. A man loses self-control of the things he handles, and over which he ought to hold the mastery.

Self-control, with its suggestion of reserved power, is a quality to be coveted. We all admire an upstanding man "of equal poise and control," self-collected, and in full command of all his powers, but a fussy, vacillating man we pity when we do not despise. There is an Old Testament oracle to the effect, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength." Quietness and confidence give to a man that indefinable quality called poise, in every motion of which there is rest; a quality which differs from pose, as that

which is natural differs from that which is artificial, or as gold differs from gilding; and which enables a man to hold himself together, and keep himself in hand, so as to make the most of himself in any situation of life.

1. *A self-controlled man has, first of all, control of his thoughts.* He has mastery over his mind so as to be able to call in his wandering thoughts, or better still keep them from wandering. The thoughts that troop through his mind are like a closely tended flock of sheep. He also has power to preserve his mental balance, and to manifest that collectedness of mind that enables him to look at two sides of a question. He is not carried to and fro with every changing wind of sentiment. He stands upon his own feet, and thinks and acts for himself.

The mental caliber of the self-controlled man may not be of the highest, yet he will often outstrip in efficiency men of greater parts whose minds are undisciplined and chaotic. Every man's success depends less upon his material equipment than upon the use he makes of it. In the race of life the prize is not always to the swift; and in the battle of life the victory is not always to the

strong. The first are often last, and the last first.

2. *A self-controlled man has control of his emotions.* He has learned to keep them under restraint. When caught in an emotional storm he does not ship the rudder, but holds it in a firm and steady hand until the storm has blown over. He is calm but not passionless. His composure is not that of an Egyptian mummy; it comes from the subjugation of emotion, not from its absence. Fluctuations of feeling he cannot avoid, but he steers straight on, keeping a watch upon his moods so as not to allow himself to become moody.

Those who are governed by impulse are still in a state of spiritual childhood. Power to control the feelings belongs to a state of spiritual maturity. Nor is it attained in a day. The feelings are wayward and insurgent, and have to be held down with a firm hand. The strongest soul has to watch and pray that he enter not into temptation; for if the floodgates are left open he will be taken off his feet, and swept along like a feather caught in a torrent. The body, from which our animal passions spring, must needs be subjected to severe discipline in order to keep it under, and give the spirit the upper hand.

The unruly tongue must be held in with bit and bridle, that angry words may not leap to the lips. "Anger," says Horace, "is momentary madness, so control your passion or it will control you." The same is true of every other passion. It must be held in leash, for if let slip it will work havoc. Emotion is that which moves, but like every other force it needs to be regulated; and the measure in which it is used to answer useful ends indicates the measure of our self-control.

3. *A self-controlled man must have an educated, disciplined, and thoroughly trained will.* The will is the center of personality. It occupies the position of president in the united states of thought and feeling. It is the governor of the engine, regulating its movements; the power that determines what the course of life will be. Before its imperial edicts difficulties apparently insurmountable give way; by arousing relaxed powers to fresh endeavor it turns the battle to the gate, plucks victory from the jaws of defeat; so that the erstwhile beaten soul, rising from the dust, goes on his triumphant way, from strength to strength, until he attains some measure of that ideal manhood for which he was originally created.

By following a system of mental gymnastics much may be done to develop the power of self-control. The gift that is within us may be stirred up, and built up. But this is not sufficient. There is a limit to human power, and there are times in the life of every man when he loses control of himself, and feels himself to be as a reed shaken by the wind. At such a time he needs reinforcement; he needs some one to take his ill-regulated, broken life, and make it over; he needs, along with any measure of self-control which he may recover, *divine* control, overtopping it, and working through it. Without this there is no certainty that any life will come out right.

The whole universe is governed by a Higher Power, and it was never meant that man should set up an independent government. When he tries to be his own master he makes a dismal failure of it. The responsibility of controlling his own life is too great a burden for him to assume. Spiritualists speak of a medium as being under the guidance of his "control." Socrates said that his life was directed by his *dæmon*, or attendant spirit. The Christian is controlled by Christ. Whatever

degree of self-mastery he attains, he attributes to him. Instead of saying

“I am master of my fate,
I am captain of my soul;”

he says

“Christ is Master of my life,
Christ is Captain of my soul.”

Passing all other earthly leaders he looks up into his face and says, “Captain, my Captain!” As the captain of his salvation made perfect in his manhood and Saviourhood through suffering, he gives to him undying allegiance, and vows to follow him through storm and sunshine, through defeat and success, until he passes with him into the light of his eternal glory.

The uncontrolled man is the man who is the least able to control himself; the man who has not learned to obey is the man who is least fitted to rule. So long as man has not yielded submission to the supreme authority the rebellious passions which rage within his breast will snap asunder all external restraints as Samson broke the green withes by which he was bound.

“He is a freeman whom *the Lord* makes free,
And all are slaves besides.”

A butterfly holding the reins which lie upon the neck of a dragon, is a caricature presented in the Museum at Naples, representing Seneca endeavoring to restrain by philosophy the passions of the imperial scapegrace Nero, his pupil. That picture is deeply suggestive. It reveals the consciousness of man as to the utter futility of all earth-born help ; and leaves an aching void for the added thought which Christianity has to offer—that a soul riding to ruin upon the dragon of unhallowed pleasure can be saved only by having the hands that hold the reins covered by the unseen hand of the Divine Deliverer.

AFFIRMATIONS.

I control and am controlled.

Self-mastery is mine through Christ.

I am at once Lord of myself, and vassal of my Lord.

I sit upon the throne of power, as vicerent of the King.

CHAPTER XVI

THE HIGHEST SELFHOOD

Not "the *higher* selfhood," but the *highest* selfhood; not the *higher* life, but the *highest* life ought to be the aim of religious endeavor. Every upstruggling soul should strive for the best. He should seek the greatest enrichment of life that is possible to him; he should seek to bring out in his character the divine idea expressed in his nature. In a word, he should seek to be the man God meant him to be.

How is the highest selfhood to be attained? No question could be more vital.

1. *It is to be attained by self-repression.* That is the first step. There is in man something that waits to be developed, and something that needs to be destroyed; seeds of good that wait to be cultivated, and weeds of evil that need to be rooted out. It is a matter of general experience that there is in human nature a principle of evil that requires

to be extirpated, a divided consciousness that requires to be unified; insurgent passions that require to be quelled; a polluted fountain that requires to be purified. Everyone who has attained the highest selfhood has had many a hard tussle with himself to keep his body under, and to keep the spirit on the top. He has had to endure self-crucifixion; to practise self-denial; to compel himself to do hard and disagreeable things; and instead of following the line of the least resistance, follow the line of heroic self-sacrifice.

One of the marked characteristics of much of the religion of the present day is its softness. It lacks virility; it fails to show the print of the nails. When asked to suffer, it imitates the pilgrim who, when the penance was imposed upon him of walking a certain number of miles with peas in his boots, took the precaution to boil the peas before setting out on his journey. Self-denial is displaced by self-indulgence; self-repression by self-assertion; the spirit is under and the body is on top.

2. *By self-expression.* The repression and suppression of the lower self is to be followed by the expression of the real and better self. Personality is not to be submerged. Religion

is to be natural. Every man is to think for himself, act for himself. His soul has rights which he is bound to respect. His individuality he is to protect, and refuse to be conformed to some shape or type alien to his nature. The city of God has twelve gates by any one of which a man may enter. One enters by the gate of the intellect, another by the gate of the emotions, another by the gate of the mystic touch, another by the lowly gate of practical, commonplace service. Every one must find his own way in. He must be himself, his better self; he must be an original, not a copy; he must give to his soul free expression and live his own life as one who is accountable to the God who made him.

3. *By self-expansion.* Brierly has well said that the chief business of life is to grow a soul. No man ought to be content to remain as he is. He ought to strive after self-improvement. It ought to be his daily endeavor to widen his horizon, to increase his capacity, to enlarge his power, that he may become a bigger and better man.

The exhortation of Paul to the Corinthians, "Be ye enlarged" (II Eph. 6:13), means that it is the duty of every Christian to keep his life from becoming poor and paltry. He is to

seek enlargement of soul that his world may be enlarged; he is to seek to grow in all the elements of moral manhood, to have his inner life deepened and widened that the circle of his influence may be enlarged. He is to grow a soul that he may have a better soul to use in the service of others.

The movement of the age is towards a larger life, and the movement of a normal Christian life is in the same direction. There is a growing desire to feel the pulsation of stronger, larger life—a life that keeps step with the unfolding purpose of God; a life, which however much it may be now “cribbed, cabined, confined,” may be a preparation for the larger life to which heaven invites us all.

4. *By self-realization.* Life is not all struggle. It has in it something of the satisfaction of attainment, something of the joy of realization. To come to one's self, to give voice to one's soul; to give embodiment to one's ideals; to realize one's aims; to fulfill one's purposes; to finish a bit of honest work, to which the Master of all good workmen cannot fail to give his approval; to have proven faithful in the discharge of some great trust, to have been useful to others in redressing wrongs, in lifting from aching shoulders

heavy burdens, and bringing sunshine into darkened lives, is to do things worth living for. Viewed in the light of divine perfection there may be much in our work to humble us, but if it has been worth doing, and we have put into it the utmost of our power, we ought to find a measure of satisfaction in it. Every man who proves his own work and finds it genuine has a right to ~~"have his glorying in regard to himself alone,"~~ and not of his neighbor" (Gal. 6:4). What is done is done, and of the reward of his work no one can rob him.

5. *By acquiring a new self.* Before seeking for fulness of self-expression it is necessary that we have the proper self to express. In seeking to be himself many a man would be giving expression to that which he had better conceal. Change in selfhood must often come before development in selfhood.

The distinctive thing about a divine religion is that it has power to change men. There is the case of Saul, to whom the promise was given, "Thou shalt be turned into another man" (I Sam. 10:6, 7). This is something more than a promise of being made a better man—an improved edition of the old man. The "other" man is indeed a better man, but

he is also a different man, a man with different tastes, ideals and aims; a man whom nobody would identify as the same man; a man in whom all old things have passed away, and all things have become new.

In one of his poems Tennyson exclaims:

“And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man that I am may cease to be.”

When the potter's vessel is marred in the making, what does he do? Does he cast his clay away? No, he mixes it over and makes it into another vessel as seems good to him. Alas, how many have got marred in the potter's hand, and need making over. They are not what God meant them to be; they have not fulfilled his ideal in their lives. They need to be made over upon a new pattern.

Divine and human activity blend. We open our hearts to God, we give our misshapen lives into his hands, and he comes into us and makes us over. We make ourselves, and yet we are not self-made. We are what we and God together have made us. Our highest selfhood is attained when we are possessed of God, and act freely, as we are acted upon by the Divine Actor.

AFFIRMATIONS.

I will not allow the good to be enemy to the best.

I will endeavor to grow a better soul than the soul I have.

I will make the divine idea expressed in my nature the ideal which I strive to realize in my life.

I will labor for the enriching of self that I may increase my contribution to the enrichment of the world.

CHAPTER XVII

THE POWER BEHIND

While much of the prevailing thought within the circle of the modern cults is manward rather than Godward, earthward rather than heavenward, by many of the leaders the working of divine power in and through the ordinary process of the mind is taken for granted; God is felt to be the underlying reality in life; the ultimate reality of thought; the supreme object of human quest; the stream of tendency by which man's little boat is upborne, and carried forward to its destined haven. Yet when the inworking power of God is assumed, it is often hesitatingly acknowledged; and when acknowledged at all the tendency is to put it last rather than first, and to say, "I and God," instead of, "God and I." Correctness of statement is often a matter of emphasis; and when the emphasis in religion is put upon man rather than upon God, the balance of truth is lost. As the Reality of Realities, God is at the center of

the universe; and in him the mind and heart of man must find their final goal and resting place.

To many God is merely a presence, vague, shadowy, intangible; a principle or essence diffused through space. To others he is a person, living and loving; one with whom they can hold personal relations; one with whom they can enjoy personal communion. It is a great gain when this latter view is attained; and the Power behind all things is seen to be *vital*, and all the movements of life within and around are seen to be the throbbings of an Infinite heart. It is still greater gain when the Power behind all things is seen to be *moral*, and the government of the world comes to be looked upon as conducted for the furtherance of moral ends. But the greater gain of all comes when the Power behind all things is seen to be working not merely for righteousness but for *redemption*. This is the Christian view. In a world where things have gone wrong God is working to put them right; in a ruined world he is working for repair; in a disordered world he is working to bring things into harmony with his predestined plan. His saving, healing, restoring power is ever at work; and just as man opens

his soul to it, and coöperates with him in conveying it to others, are those redemptive ends attained upon which the heart of God is set.

The ceaseless activity of a redeeming God is the ultimate ground of human hope. With all the relieving light that can be thrown upon it, life at the best is a painful mystery. It would be a bitter mockery as well did we not believe that back of all our struggling lies the Eternal will working for us; and that there is no wrong tendency which it cannot enable us to check; no wrong habit which it cannot enable us to overcome; no ideal righteousness which it cannot enable us to achieve.

In harmony with the idea that the Power behind all things is working for redemption. Jesus revealed God as a Father seeking his children; giving himself to them; suffering vicariously for their sins, that he might melt them to repentance, and win them back. But what has not always been recognized in the teaching of Jesus is that he unites the thought of God's Fatherhood with that of his immanence, so as to make the idea of God potentially redemptive, by leading men to discover in Universal Life by which they are haunted the Universal Father by whom they are loved. Mark his epoch-making words:—

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"The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth, God is spirit, and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23, 24). These words make it clear that God who is spirit is also Father; that the Presence which pervades all things is a fatherly Presence; yea, the very Presence of the Father Himself. In his "Highest Pantheism," Tennyson, evidently thinking of these words, thus exhorts:

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with
Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands
and feet."

To that exhortation should be added, "Speak to Him, also, because he is the Spirit-Father, who knows and understands; and in the bosom of whose infinite compassion every child of his can pillow his head in the hour of his desolation. As spirit he is near; as Father he is knowable. As Father he has revealed himself in Christ; as Spirit he reveals himself in the soul. In the light and joy of his fatherly presence we walk by faith and not by sight. Yet we are as sure of him, and of the constancy of the operations of his re-

deeming love, as we are of the operations of the final forces of nature. In all the wide world there is nothing upon which we can so confidently count as upon his sympathy and help. Is it any wonder that men pray to him? Is it any wonder that they make him the object of their confidence and worship?

AFFIRMATIONS.

God is mine, and I am his.

God is for me, and not against me.

God is ever at work for my redemption.

God is the soul of the universe.

God is my Father, and I am his child.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE HIGHER ENVIRONMENT

We are reminded in those days of the part which our earthly environment has to play in the shaping of character and destiny; what we are apt to overlook in the part which our higher environment has to play within the same sphere of action. If our earthly environment is great, our heavenly environment is greater; if our earthly environment is often against us, our heavenly environment is always for us.

In God "we live, and move, and have our being." He is the ground of our existence, the source of our sustenance. All our springs are in him. We came from him, we return to him, we live in him; our true life is realized in union with him.

As adjustment to environment is the first law of physical life, it is also the first law of spiritual life. A fish cannot live out of water, an animal out of the air, nor can man live out of God. He has no independent life. Severed from God he withers and dies. In God he lives and moves and has his being

with respect to his higher life as well as with respect to his lower life.

This is the thought that lies at the heart of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith; namely, adjustment to environment. And that begins with adjustment to God with respect to sin. There can be no such thing as getting right with God until the question of sin is settled. Friendship with God is impossible except through reconciliation. When Paul says, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1), his argument is that through the cross of Christ comes repentance, through repentance comes forgiveness, and through forgiveness comes adjustment, and through adjustment comes peace. This adjustment, which Paul describes as receiving the at-one-ment or reconciliation (Rom. 5:11), is a matter of personal experience. It takes place within the soul of the believer. But it does not end there. It becomes an organizing force working from within outwards; bringing man into adjustment to his earthly as well as his heavenly environment, and putting him right as to his relation with his fellowmen as well as with God.

From adjustment comes harmony—har-

mony with God, and with his perfect will. This includes resignation, submission, and complete surrender. To bring man into harmony with the divine will is the end of all religious endeavor. The problem of life is simplified when its manifold objects of desire and pursuit have been reduced to one—the will of the Father. A divided will, a will that is drawn in opposite directions is like “the surge of the sea, whirled and swayed by the wind”—a will that is brought into oneness with God is like the ocean depths which are undisturbed by the fiercest storms. When the soul has passed through the struggle which belongs to the initial stage of the Christian life, and there is realized the “oned” life of which the English mystic, Juliania of Norwich speaks; a life whose aim is single because all its motions are controlled and directed by the Supreme Will into which it has been fused—it is brought into harmony with the order of the universe. Then is verified the saying of Dante, “In his will is our rest”; for when this adjustment is made every element of discord is taken out of life, its complete harmonization with the Perfect Will is effected, and something is henceforth known of what the life of heaven is like.

The Scripture injunction, "Keep yourselves in the love of God" (Jude 21), might be rendered: Keep yourselves in your higher environment; abide in it as the native air and sustaining element of your soul's true life; let God's love possess you; let it express itself in you, and through you; let it have its way with you, so that it may produce the "oned" heart, from which the "oned" will comes. Those who keep themselves in the love of God come to resemble him in the essential quality of his nature; for "God is love." To dwell in God is to dwell in love, and to dwell in love is to dwell in God. This is what is meant by becoming "partakers of the divine nature"; it is to become Godlike in love; it is to become vibrant to every motion of the divine heart; responsive to every urge of the divine will; coöperative with every outgoing of divine activity. So real and practical is this heart-union that all who experience it may be said to blend so completely into the life of God that for them to live is for God to live in them, and through them.

AFFIRMATIONS.

God lives *with* me, and I live with Him.

God lives *in* me, and I live in Him.

God lives *for* me, and I live for Him.

CHAPTER XIX

HOW TO WIN OUT

In order to win out in life two things are necessary—self-reliance, and reliance upon God. These two things are not exclusive the one of the other. They are the two wings by which man is to soar; the two oars by which he is to propel his boat. Take either away and the highest progress is impossible.

A man to succeed must have faith in himself. He must believe in his ability to do what others have done, and to work out his own destiny. He must not be a feather tossed upon the stream, but a living soul cutting his way against the current. He must “will to win.” Said Virgil concerning the winning boat crew, “They are able because they think they are able.” To doubt one’s self is to lose the battle before a blow has been struck.

God has not made goodness easy. It is not something into which we can float, but something for which we have to fight. To achieve it we have to summon to the struggle “all that is within us.” In the final issue everything will depend upon the strength of the forces

which we have gathered together with the citadel of the soul.

The emphasis which Emerson has put upon self-reliance is altogether a wholesome one. It has supplied a needed tonic, and roused the slumbering powers of the soul into action. Especially valuable has it been in supplying an antidote to the unmanly attitude of undue reliance upon others. It has been made to appear an ignoble thing to be a parasite or a drone—living upon others; to be a consumer rather than a producer; and to eat one's bread in the sweat of another man's brow. Instead of falling back helplessly upon others every man ought to draw upon his own resources; develop his own powers; stand upon his own feet; live his own life; increase by trading his own talents; pay his own way in the world; and live in all respects a life of manly independence such as befits a being made in the image of God.

But when the antithesis is self-reliance, upon God, that is another matter. A declaration of independence comes with poor grace from the lips of a puny mortal who cannot draw a single breath save by the will and grace of the Higher Power. In dependence upon God, man's entire life, physical and

spiritual, is rooted. In God he lives. He is sustained by his nurturing love; protected by his sheltering care; upheld by his unfailing power. He lives because God lives.

However loath he may be to acknowledge it, in his heart of hearts man knows that he needs God. It is a matter of universal experience that in his utmost extremity he does not look around or within, but above. He instinctively feels that from thence cometh his help. If true to the call of his spirit he will pray. For what is prayer but the cry of the insufficient to the All-Sufficient? Sooner or later every man comes to an end of himself, and of all human help. He is driven back to God from the conviction that he has nowhere else to go. All human resources are inadequate; especially his own. His paradoxical situation is well described in the lines of a modern poet:

“Should any to himself for safety fly,
The way to save himself, if any were,
Were to fly from himself.”

And when he flies from himself where can he go to better himself save to the one whose resources are infinite? When every earthly stream runs dry, what can any mortal do to

keep his soul alive but hie himself away to the upper springs which flow among the mountains of God?

One of the things for which man depends upon God is *wisdom*. No one is equal to the solving of his life's perplexing problems. "The way of a man is not in himself." "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Every man needs some one wiser than himself to unravel for him life's tangled skein. Listen to Abraham Lincoln as he declares that when weighted down with the cares of state he found that his own wisdom and skill, and the wisdom and skill of those around him, were inadequate for the day's demands; and that there was nothing left for him to do but to seek the counsel of the All-Wise—which counsel he implicitly accepted and followed. This need of divine enlightenment and direction the strongest natures have felt. It is the human, the limited, and the fallible within us that cries out:

"I could not live without Thee,
I cannot stand alone,
I have no strength or goodness,
No wisdom of my own."

In order that we lose not our way, and make a failure of life, we need, oh how much

we need to gain God's point of view; to see light in his light; and to be led step by step by his guiding hand in the path of his own choosing.

Another thing that all men need is *strength*. They need the undergirding of a power from above and beyond their own. Men differ as to natural strength. Some are living dynamos, brimful of energy and efficiency. Others are constitutionally weak; and what little power they originally possessed is often thrown away in self-indulgence, until they come to a state of utter bankruptcy. To the latter class Christianity comes with its gospel of help. "To him that hath no might it increaseth strength." Concerning the weak brother, it says, "He shall be made to stand, for the Lord hath power to make him stand," and this power is always ready to break into the soul that seeks him, and opens toward him. From the pit into which man has heedlessly slipped, or into which he has been wickedly pushed, the divine arm is long enough and strong enough to lift him out. And that downstretched arm is always within reach. Thomas Arnold of Rugby was wont to say that the worth of an educational institution is to be determined by what it can do for the bottom

boy. The worth of a religion is to be determined by what it can do for the bottom man—the man who is down and out—the man whose life is an utter ruin. It is also determined for what it can do for the strong man in his weak moments, when his philosophy of life gives way, as in the case of Marcus Aurelius, the noblest of the Stoics, who broke in two upon the death of his only daughter. Has it recuperative power? Can it set a man on his feet again? Can it impart unto him a new power by which he will henceforth be able to live a victorious life? This Christianity professes to be able to do so.

There is an illustrative story of a Spartan king who made a great feast for a favorite general, but on the day appointed the general died. Being wishful not to disappoint his invited guests the king dressed up his general in his uniform, and attempted to seat him at the table. Finding difficulty in giving to him the semblance of life, he gave the project up, remarking, "It will not do, he needs something within." That is what man needs to stand upright, and to walk in the way of righteousness—he needs something within—he needs that vital power which can be found only by coming into connection with the source of life.

Thus it becomes evident that between two opposite poles of thought the whole truth upon this subject lies. Man is to rely upon himself, and at the same time he is to rely upon God. The clarion call, "Quit ye like men; be strong," has for its counterpart, "Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." Develop and use your own power to its utmost, but at the same time take hold of Heaven's help. It is in alliance with God that man succeeds in the spiritual as in the natural realm. By himself he can accomplish nothing in either sphere of action. It is in the spiritual sphere, however, that he is most apt to come short in the application of this principle. The proper balance was observed by Paul, who upon saying, "I of my own self can do nothing," immediately added, "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me." This is the true Christian position; not, "I myself" but "God and I together."

"I cannot do it alone,
The waves rise fast and high,
And the fogs close chill around,
And the light goes out of the sky;
But I know that we two
Shall win the end—
God and I."

When Philip II, swollen with pride, exclaimed, "Time and I against any two," he cut a sorry figure. Very different would his end have been had he exclaimed: "God and I against any two." The soul that does not make the great alliance is sure to fail in life's struggle; and the soul that makes it is just as sure to win.

AFFIRMATIONS.

There is some way for me to succeed, if I can only find it.

The highest success will be missed unless I win life's true end.

Apart from God worth-while success cannot be attained.

Linking up with God failure is impossible, for he will be responsible for my success.

CHAPTER XX

TRUE SUCCESS

God certainly wants us all to succeed in life; he expects us to succeed; he has made it possible for us to succeed. And yet, alas, upon how many lives is failure written. But there are no inevitable failures; and there are no failures that may not be turned into victories. No matter how hard the fight may go it is possible to win out at last.

But before we can decide whether life has been successful or not, the question to be considered is, What is a successful life? What is the standard by which human success is judged? Was the life of Jesus successful? Undoubtedly not, if judged by the world's standard. And yet it is by this life that the value of every other life is ultimately to be tested.

The three things which are generally regarded as constituting the elements of a successful life are wealth, health, and happiness. But are these essential to success?

Take *wealth*. Wealth is good, but it is not the chief good. Yet it is generally so regarded. The popular conception of a successful man is one who begins life as a poor boy, and by pinching, and hoarding, and scheming, becomes a multimillionaire. When a man dies his success is generally estimated by the material wealth he has left behind him, rather than by the spiritual wealth he has taken with him. The world may say, He died rich; while the angels say, He died poor. According to Christ's standard "a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesses." It consisteth in what he *is* rather than what he *has*.

It is a significant fact that we speak of material things as "goods"; meaning by that good things; as if in them was to be found the *summum bonum* of human existence. Desirable they are, but they are not the chief good, and are not essential to a successful life. Some of the noblest of lives have been lived in the midst of the most abject poverty. The poet Burns, with practical sagacity, declares:

"They who fa' in fortune's strife
 Their fate we shouldna censure,
 For still the important end of life
 They equally may answer."

Even if stripped to the bone they may give sympathy, love, friendship—gifts more precious than gold. Among the world's greatest benefactors have been those who had to say, "Silver and gold have we none, but such as we have give we unto you." One gave an immortal song, another an immortal picture, another an epoch-making invention. They gave what they had. Of them it might be said, "Poor yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Poverty is never extolled in the New Testament. Jesus did not say "Blessed are *the* poor"; but he did say, "Blessed are *ye* poor"; that is, blessed are ye whose poverty is only of an outward kind—for yours is the kingdom—to you belong the riches of the spiritual realm.

Nothing but disaster can come from giving the primacy to material things. The end of life is not a bigger bank account, but bigger souls. There are those "whose plenty makes them poor," and there are those whose poverty makes them rich; there are those who are "rich towards God," and poor towards men; and those who are rich towards men, and poor towards God. Riches are not to be despised; and if honorably won and wisely used they

add to life's enlargement; but if a man's possessions are merely material; if, with all his getting he has missed "the true riches"—the riches of the spirit—he will find at last that although fortune may have poured into his lap gifts beyond ambition's wildest dreams he has drawn a blank in life's lottery.

2. *Health.* Health is good, but it is not the chief good. A sound mind in a sound body is the ideal condition; but life is seldom ideal; and often we find a sound mind in a diseased body, and sometimes an unsound mind in a healthy body. Mind and body are often badly mismatched.

The body is the instrument of the mind. When disabled by disease it robs a man of his practical efficiency. Instead of helping him to perform his life-task, it is very much in the way. Sickness is a clog upon the soul. That good may eventually come from it is not to be denied, but in itself it is not good. While it lasts we are to bear it bravely, and try to extract from it what benefit we may, but at the same time we are to pray and labor for its removal. Vigorous, bounding, overbrimming health is a boon to be prized and an object to be eagerly sought after.

The war against disease was never carried

on more intelligently, aggressively, and successfully than at present. The vast army of healers, regulars and irregulars, may not be well mobilized, but they are driving towards the same end; and each separate detachment is equally certain that to it belongs the greatest measure of success. They all keep assuring us that the enemy is on the run; and that his total rout is not far off. However that may be, we know that up to the present all attempts to combat disease have been only partially successful. It is still with us, and it has a firm footing. We are all open to its attacks. Besides being liable to accidents, we are the victims of hereditary tendencies to disease, and the prey of all sorts of disease-breeding microbes. In spite of any precaution any day we may find ourselves *hors de combat*, and carried to the rear.

Is this world only for the well? Is there no place in it for the sick? Is it not possible to triumph over sickness, and in spite of it answer the end of life? What is the record of history upon this point? Is it not that physical dwarfs have often been moral giants; that bed-ridden invalids have been ministering angels; that from pain-racked bodies has come the sweetest music; that in the fires of

suffering character has been refined; that physical infirmity has often proved a spur to the highest endeavor; and that from the broken alabaster vase has come the sweetest fragrance? Take from the world the contributions to its weal made by the sick and the infirm and it would be greatly impoverished.

The present age has a shrinking from sickness, a dread of pain, a horror of death. People want to live long; and no class of literature is more popular than that which attempts to show how longevity is to be attained. But is old age always a blessing? Is the value of a life to be tested by its length? Is it not better to live well than to live long? May not a life cut off in its prime, or before, fulfill its ends in a nobler way than a life which has dribbled out through a hundred years of low or small pursuits? Is it a thing to be mourned over when a brave soul goes down fighting with the flag flying at the mast head?

3. *Happiness.* Happiness is good, but it is not the chief good. The chief good is goodness. The thing for which we have been sent into this world is not to enjoy ourselves, but to develop a good character. Happiness will generally come when not directly sought.

If made the object of pursuit it will prove a will-o'-the-wisp, luring us on into the Dismal Swamp of disappointment.

Our happiness must be to God a matter of deep concern; but he is more concerned about our holiness than about our happiness, about our character than about our comfort. Just because his heart is set on our highest welfare he will not scruple to sacrifice the one for the other. It is his design that out of life's losses should come its greatest gains; out of its disasters its greatest triumphs; out of its sorrows its sweetest graces. Many a man in taking a retrospective view of life has been led to declare, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." But he did not think so at the time. It was his back-sight that gave to him a new vision of life's meaning, and brought him to discern "a soul, of goodness in things evil."

Today there is a strong tendency to ignore the unpleasant facts of life, and to keep back the cup of consolation which Christianity has to offer to the poor, the sick, and the sorrowing. The outward prosperity which in the Old Testament is the promised reward of virtue is sought, rather than the spiritual prosperity which is the promise of the New;

Christ is followed for the loaves and fishes, and the religious cult that offers the largest material rewards is sure to have the largest following. What an alluring bait, for instance, is that which consists in the promise of being shown how to obtain power "for healing, for creative success, and a full pocket-book"; and how to develop "the providing faculty, and money-magnet," so as to gain "financial mastery." This is a much thriftier way than that of losing the world to save one's soul, inasmuch as by it one gains the world while saving his soul at the same time.

The material benefits of a good life can hardly be overestimated. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." "The meek shall inherit the earth." The good man has the best of it even here. But if wealth, and health, and happiness be denied he can live a true and successful life without them. And if stripped bare of all worldly possessions, he knows that he has "for himself a better possession, and an abiding one."

AFFIRMATIONS.

Success is my birthright.

I was made for nobler ends than I have yet attained.

My success I measure by heavenly and not by earthly standards, and covet only that which God calls success.

The God whose interests are bound up in mine will enable me to attain the highest success of which I am capable.

CHAPTER XXI

IN THE MAKING

Although at the opposite pole from sociology New Thought shows a similar tendency to put the emphasis upon the earth-side of religion. In its dread of other-worldliness it is apt to lean towards over-worldliness. It is not unwilling to take the future upon faith or upon chance, as the case may be, provided that it makes sure of the rewards of the present. In manifesting this pragmatic spirit, it does not differ from much of our modern Christianity, which fails to eternalize life by setting it in eternal relations; and persists in looking at it in its time aspects rather than *sub specie æternitatis*. In this then there is a great loss.

By describing man as a candidate for eternity our fathers may have obscured the deeper truth that he is under *training* for eternity; but they discerned the intimate and vital relation between the life that now is and the life which is to come, as we seldom do. The modern idea of life as an education rather than a probation marks a great advance

of thought; and it has implications and applications of which we as yet but little dream. If life is from beginning to end educationary and disciplinary; if it is only the first stage in a process endless development; if its noblest purposes and highest ends are never fully wrought out under these earthly skies, we are forced to look to the future for the completion of what is here begun. More time is needed than man's brief sojourn here affords for the education of a soul.

In the present stage of his educationary career man has been placed in a world that is very far from being ideally perfect; a world that is still in the making; a world in which everything is in the crucible to be made meet for the higher uses. As it now exists this is a dualistic world. In it good and evil, joy and sorrow, are strangely intermingled. Alongside of hopes fulfilled are disasters and tragedies. Running through the music of life is an undertone of anguish. "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." It is in the throes of a great rebirth; and its labor pains are as protracted as was the original creation process, when chaos passed into cosmos. If we could see far enough ahead we would behold that ideal

world which has ever been before the mind of God, and of which poets and seers have caught fugitive glimpses; a world from which all sin, all sorrow and suffering have forever passed away. But whatever the future may bring, the world in which man now finds himself is puzzling and perplexing. How can it be otherwise when it is still unfinished? If we give to it finality, and think of it as a place for comfort and enjoyment, it is certainly a miserable failure. We can think of many ways in which it could have been improved. But if we look upon it as a school of training, where everything has been arranged to promote spiritual development, it is seen to be the best possible kind of a world. To those who come to discern the ends which this world was meant to secure, it has a new meaning. But to those who fail to see that everything is being subordinated to spiritual ends, and that the material is not only being subordinated to the spiritual, but is often sacrificed to it, there will always be happening "things hard to be understood." Yet we wonder that those who see that through fire and earthquake comes the new city should not also see that through earthly loss and disaster may come the heavenly kingdom.

But not only is this world still in the making—man himself is still in the making. "Man is not man as yet." He is far from being what God has meant him to be, what he is at his best moments aspires to be, and what he shall yet be when God is through with him. He is still in the germ. His life is broken and fragmentary. Even when apparently rounded out it always suggests something more to come. It resembles a rough outline sketch left by a master artist, which gives the merest hint of what is in his mind. Life is too short to span the entire plan and purpose of God; or to finish the discipline and training of a human soul. We have to look farther forward to find a condition of fulfillment in which all we have hoped for is realized; but were it not striven after life would be an utter failure. To say that we are saved by our ideals is the modern way of saying that we are saved by faith.

Seeing that life is still in the making it cannot be expected to be free from struggle. "In this world ye shall have tribulation," says the Master, and he adds: "but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world"; implying that in his victory we may share. The fact that the end of life is moral determines the

use of means. If that which God has in view in our lives is the perfecting of character he will order the events, and select the agencies best fitted to secure that end. Brooding over this problem, one of old asked, "Who knoweth what is good for a man in this life?" (Ex. 6:13). To that question there can be but one answer—None, but the All-Wise.

God is ever at work upon us, seeking, with infinite patience and perseverance, to fashion us into the image of the Perfect Life. He is not in a hurry, for he has all the ages in which to work; yet he never slackens in his effort, for every case is urgent and allows of no letting up. What any life will be when infinite love shall have done its perfect work on it and in it we can but dimly guess; but the little we do know of the divine plan entitles us to say with Victor Hugo:

"What matters it though life uncertain be,
To all? What though the goal
Be never reached? What though it fade and flee?
Have we not each a soul?

A soul that must quickly rise and soar
To regions far more pure—
Arise and dwell where pain can be no more,
And every joy be sure.

152 NEW THOUGHT CHRISTIANIZED

Be like a bird that on a bough too frail
To bear him, gaily sings;
He carols though the slender branches fail,
He knows that he has wings."

AFFIRMATIONS.

Being still in the making I will be patient with God, and with myself.

I am not a lump of lifeless clay in the hands of the Divine Potter; but have something to say about the shaping of my life and character.

However painful the process of soul-making may be, I will submit to it bravely in view of the end to be gained.

In the midst of the discouragement of the present I am heartened by the vision of the perfect man, and the perfect society, yet to be.

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